This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

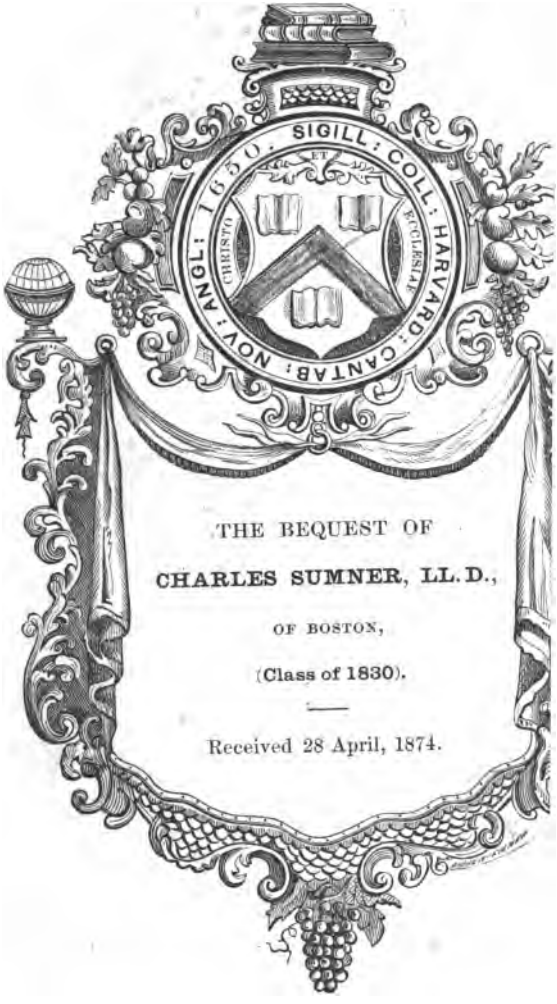
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

38.48

H 6038.26.7



THE BEQUEST OF

CHARLES SUMNER, LL.D.,

OF BOSTON,

(Class of 1830).

Received 28 April, 1874.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE HISTORY OF CHIVALRY; OR KNIGHTHOOD AND ITS TIMES.

BY

CHARLES MILLS,

AUTHOR OF

THE HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES, ETC., ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

LEA AND BLANCHARD.

1844.

Digitized by Google

and he has scattered up and down his little volume and a half many curious notices of ancient manners.

The other work is written in the German language, and for that reason is but very little known in this country. It is called Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, (two volumes, octavo, Leipzig, 1823,) and is the substance of a course of lectures on chivalry delivered by the author, Mr. Büsching, to his pupils of the High School at Breslau. The style of the work is the garrulous, slovenly, ungrammatical style which lecturers, in all countries, and upon all subjects, think themselves privileged to use. A large portion of the book is borrowed from Sainte Palaye; much of the remainder relates to feudalism and other matters distinct from chivalry: but when the writer treats of the state of knighthood in Germany I have found his facts and observations of very great value.

Attention to the subjects of the middle ages of Europe has for many years been growing among us. It was first excited by Warton's History of our National Verse, and Percy's edition of the Relics of Ancient English Poetry. The romances of chivalry, both in prose and metre, and the numberless works on the Troubadour, and every other description of literature during the middle ages which have been published within the last few years, have sustained the interest. The poems of Scott convinced the world that the chivalric times of Europe can strike the moral imagination as powerfully and pleasingly in respect of character, passion, and picturesqueness of effect, as the heroic ages of Greece; and even very recently the glories of chivalry have been sung by a poetess whom Ariosto himself would have been delighted to honour.* Still, however, no attempt has been hitherto made to describe at large the institutions of knighthood, the foundation of all that elegant superstructure of poetry and romance which we admire, and to mark the history of chivalry in the various countries of Europe. Those institutions have, indeed, been allowed a few pages in our encyclopædias; and some of the sketches of them are drawn with such boldness and precision of outline, that we may regret the authors did not present us with finished pictures. Our popular historians have but hastily alluded to the subject; for they were so much busied with feudalism and politics, that they could afford but a small space for the play of the lighter graces of chivalry.

For a description, indeed, of antique manners, our materials are not so ample as for that of their public lives. But still the subject is not without its witnesses. The monkish chroniclers sometimes give us a glimpse of the castles of our ancestors. Many of the knights in days of yore had their biographers; and, for the most interesting time of chivalry, we possess a historian, who, for vividness of delineation, kindliness of feeling, and naïveté of language, is the Herodotus of the middle ages.

"Did you ever read Froissart?"

"No," answered Henry Morton.

"I have half a mind," rejoined Claverhouse, "to contrive that you should have six months' imprisonment, in order to procure you that pleasure. His chapters inspire me with more enthusiasm than even poetry itself."

Froissart's† history extends from the year 1316 to 1400. It was begun by him when he was twenty years old, at the command of his dear lord and master, Sir Robert of Namur, Lord of Beaufort. The annals from 1326 to 1356 are founded on the Chronicles compiled by him whom he calls "The Right Reverend, discreet, and sage Master John la Bele, some time canon in St. Lambertis of Liege, who with good heart and due diligence did his true devoir in writing his book; and heard of many fair and noble adventures from his being well beloved, and of the secret counsel of the Lord Sir John of Hainault." Froissart corrected all this borrowed matter on the information of the barons and knights of his time re-

* The Troubadour, &c. By L. E. L., author of the Improvisatrice. 12mo.

† Jean Froissart, called Sir Jean Froissart (the title, Sir, being in the middle ages common to all who were either in the holy orders of the church or in the holy order of knighthood), was born at Valenciennes in the year 1337, and died in 1397.

Digitized by Google

garding their families' gestes and prowesses. He is the chronicler both of political events and of chivalric manners. Of his merits in the first part of his character it falls not within my province to speak. For the office of historian of chivalry no man could present such fair pretensions. His father being a herald-painter, he was initiated in his very early years into that singular form of life which he describes with such picturesque beauty. "Well I loved," as he says of his youth, in one of his poems, "to see dances and carolling, and to hear the songs of minstrels and tales of glee. It pleased me to attach myself to those who took delight in hounds and hawks. I was wont to toy with my fair companions at school, and methought I had the art well to win the grace of maidens." — "My ears quickened at the sound of opening the wine-flask, for I took great pleasure in drinking, and in fair array, and in fresh and delicate viands. I loved to see (as is reason) the early violets, and the white and red roses, and also chambers brilliantly lighted; dances and late vigils, and fair beds for my refreshment; and for my better repose, I joyously quaffed a night-draught of claret, or Rochelle wine mingled with spice."

Froissart wrote his Chronicles "to the intent that the honourable and noble adventures of feats of arms, done and achieved in the wars of France and England, should notably be enregistered, and put in perpetual memory; whereby the preux and hardy might have ensample to encourage them in their well-doing."* To accomplish his purpose, he followed and frequented the company of divers noble and great lords, as well in France, England, and Scotland, as in other countries; and in their chivalric festivals he inquired for tales of arms and amours. For three years he was clerk of the chamber to Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III. He travelled into Scotland; and, though mounted only on a simple palfrey, with his trunk placed on the hinder part of his saddle, after the fashion in which a squire carried the mail-harness of a knight, and attended only by a greyhound, the favourite dog of the time, instead of a train of varlets, yet the fame of his literary abilities introduced him to the castle of Dalkeith, and the court of the Scottish king.

He generally lived in the society of nobles and knights, — at the courts of the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Namur, and the Earl of Blois. He knew and admired the Black Prince, Du Guesclin, the Douglas, and Hotspur; and while this various acquaintance fitted him to describe the circumstances and manners of his times, it prevented him from the bias of particular favouritism. The character of his mind, rather than his station in life, determined his pursuits. His profession was that of the church: he was a while curate of Lestines, in the diocess of Liege; and, at the time of his death, he was canon and treasurer of the collegiate church of Chimay. But he was a greater reader of romances than of his breviary; and, churchman though he was, knighthood itself could not boast of a more devoted admirer of dames and damsels. He was, therefore, the very man to describe the chivalric features of his time.

The romances of chivalry are another source of information. Favyn says, with truth and fancy, "The greater part of antiquities are to be sought for and derived out of the most ancient tales, as well in prose as verse, like pearls out of the smoky papers of Ennius." The romance-writers were to the middle ages of Europe what the ancient poets were to Greece, — the painters of the manners of their times. As Sir Walter Scott observes, "We have no hesitation in quoting the romances of chivalry as good evidence of the laws and customs of knighthood. The authors, like the artists of the period, invented nothing, but, copying the manners of the age in which they lived, transferred them, without doubt or scruple, to the period and personages of whom they treated."

From all these sources of information I have done my devoir, in the following pages, to describe the origin of chivalry; and, after escaping from the dark times in which it arose, to mark the various degrees of the personal nobility of knighthood. An inquiry into the nature and duty of the chivalric character then wil

* The Prologue of Froissart — Lord Berners's translation.

Digitized by Google

follow; and we cannot pass, without regard and homage, the sovereign-mistress and lady-love of the adventurous knight. After viewing our cavalier in the gay and graceful pastime of the tournament, and pausing a while to behold him when a peculiar character of religion was added to his chivalry, we shall see him vault upon his good steed; and we will accompany him in the achievement of his high and hardy emprises in Britain, France, Spain, Germany, and Italy.

As a view of chivalry is, from its nature, a supplement or an appendix to the history of Europe, I have supposed my readers to be acquainted with the general circumstances of past ages, and therefore I have spoken of them by allusion rather than by direct statement. I have made the following work as strictly chivalric as the full and fair discussion of my subject would permit me, avoiding descriptions of baronial and feudal life, except in its connexion with knighthood. I have not detailed military circumstances of former times, unless they proceeded from chivalric principles, or were invested with chivalric graces. Thus the celebrated battle of the Thirty had nothing in it of a knightly character, and therefore I have left it unnoticed. Judicial combats had their origin in the state of society from which both feudalism and chivalry sprang; but they were not regulated by the gentle laws of knighthood, and therefore have not been described by me. I have not imposed any dry legal facts and discussions upon my readers; for the incidents attached to the tenure of land called the tenure in chivalry were strictly feudal; and the courts of the constable and marshal, holding cognizance as they did of all matters regarding war, judicial combats, and blazonry of arms, relate not so much to chivalry as to the general preservation of the peace of the land, and the good order of society. And it should be mentioned, that it has not been my purpose to give a minute history of every individual cavalier: for a work strictly confined to biographical detail, however convenient it might be for occasional reference, would be tiresome and tedious by reason of the repetition of circumstances only varied with the difference of names, and would be anything but historical. I have brought the great characters of chivalry, who have received but slight attention from the political historian, in illustration of the principles of knighthood. Thus full-length portraits of those English knights of prowess, Sir John Chandos and Sir Walter Manny, will be more interesting than pictures of Edward III. and the Black Prince, whose features are so well known to us. From the lives of these royal heroes I have therefore only selected such chivalric circumstances as have not been sufficiently described and dwelt upon, or which it was absolutely incumbent on me to state, in order to preserve an unbroken thread of narrative.

I shall not expatiate on the interest and beauty of my subject, lest I should provoke too rigid an inquiry into my ability for discussing it. I shall therefore only conclude, in the good old phrase of Chaucer, —

"Now, hold your mouth, pour charitie,
Both knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spell,
Of battaille and of chivalry
Of ladies' love and druerie,
Anon I wol you tell."

Digitized by Google

*** While these volumes were passing through the press, the tales of the Crusaders appeared. In the second of them is contained a series of supposed propositions from Saladin for peace between his nation and the English. The conclusion of those propositions is thus expressed : — " Saladin will put a sacred seal on this happy union betwixt the bravest and noblest of Frangistan and Asia, by raising to the rank of his royal spouse a Christian damsel, allied in blood to King Richard, and known by the name of the Lady Edith of Plantagenet," vol. iv., pp. 13, 14. Upon this passage of his text the author remarks in a note : " This may appear so extraordinary and improbable a proposition that it is necessary to say such a one was actually made. The historians, however, substitute the widowed Queen of Naples, sister of Richard, for the bride, and Saladin's brother for the bridegroom. They appear to be ignorant of the existence of Edith of Plantagenet. See MILL's (MILLS') History of the Crusades.

In that work I observe, that " Richard proposed a consolidation of the Christian and Muhammedan interests ; the establishment of a government at Jerusalem, partly European and partly Asiatic ; and these schemes of policy were to be carried into effect by the marriage of Saphadin (Saladin's brother) with the widow of William King of Sicily."

M. Michaud, the French historian of the Crusades, makes a similar statement. He says that Richard " fit d'autres propositions, auxquelles il intéressa adroitement l'ambition de Malec Adel, frère du Sultan. La veuve du Guillaume de Sicile fut proposée en marriage au Prince Musulman." Hist. des Croisades, vol. ii., p. 414.

Whether or no " the historians" are ignorant of the existence of " Edith of Plantagenet" is not the present question. The question is, which of the two opposite statements is consistent with historical truth. The statement of M. Michaud and myself is supported by the principal Arabic historians, by writers, who, as every student in history knows, are of unimpeachable credit. Bohadin, in his life of Saladin, says, that " the Englishman was desirous that Almalick Aladin should take his sister to wife. (Her brother had brought her with him from Sicily, when he passed through that island, to the deceased lord of which she had been married."*) To the same effect Abulfeda observes, " Hither came the embassadors of the Franks to negotiate a peace ; and offered this condition, that Malek al Adel, brother of the Sultan, should receive the sister of the King of England in marriage, and Jerusalem for a kingdom."† That this sister, Joan, the widowed Queen of Sicily, was with Richard in the Holy Land, is proved by a passage in Matthew Paris, p. 171. She and the wife of Richard are mentioned together, and no other person of royal rank.

Thus, therefore, " the historians" are correct in their statement, that the matrimonial proposition was made by the English to Saladin, and that the parties were to be the brother of Saladin and the widowed Queen of Sicily. The novelist has not supported his assertion by a single historical testimony ; and we may defy him to produce a tittle of evidence on his side.

In the composition of his tales, the author of Waverley has seldom shown much respect for historical keeping. But greater accuracy than this no person had a right to expect in the text of a mere novel ; and as long as he gave his readers no excuse for confounding fiction with truth, the play of his brilliant and excursive imagination was harmless. Thus in the Talisman, the poetical antiquarian only

* I subjoin Schultens's Latin version of the Arabic passage in Bohadin, vita et res gestæ Saladini, c. 127, p. 209. " Cupere Anglum ut Almalichus Aladilus sororem ipsius in matrimonium duceret (eam e Sicilia cujus functo domino nupta fuerat, secum avexerat frater, quum insulam illam trajiceret.")

† Reiske's Latin version of Abulfeda is this : — " Illuc commeabant Francorum pacis causa legati, eam offerentes conditionem, uc Malec-al-Adel, frater Sultani sororem Regis Angliæ in matrimonium, et Hierosolymas in regnum acciperet." Abulfeda, vol. iv., p. 111.

Digitized by Google

smiles when he finds the romance of the Squire of Low Degree quoted as familiar to the English long before it was written; and when, in the Betrothed, Gloucester is raised into a bishoprick three centuries and a half before the authentic æra, we equally admit the author's license of anachronism. On these two occasions, as in innumerable other instances, in which the novelist, whether intentionally or unwittingly, has strayed from the path of historical accuracy, he has never given formal warranty for the truth of his statements, and he is entitled to laugh at the simple credulity which could mistake his Tales for veracious chronicles: but his assertion respecting the marriage of Saladin with his "Edith of Plantagenet" is a very different case. For here he throws aside the fanciful garb of a novelist, and quits the privilege of his text, that he may gravely and critically vouch in a note for the errors of our historians, and his own superior knowledge. If this can possibly be done merely to heighten the illusion of his romance, it is carrying the jest a little too far; for the preservation of historical truth is really too important a principle to be idly violated. But if he seriously designed to unite the province of the historian with that of the novelist, he has chosen a very unlucky expedient for his own reputation; and thus, in either case, he has rather wantonly led his readers into error, and brought against others a charge of ignorance, which must recoil more deservedly on himself.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND FIRST APPEARANCES OF CHIVALRY IN EUROPE.

General Nature of Chivalry.—Military and Moral Chivalry.—Origin of Chivalry.—Usages of the Germans.—Election of Soldiers.—Fraternity.—Dignity of Obedience.—Gallantry.—The Age of Charlemagne.—Chivalry modified by Religion.—Ceremonies of Anglo-Saxon Inauguration.— Chivalry sanctioned by Councils, and regarded as a Form of Christianity.—Nature of Chivalric Nobility.—Its Degrees.—Knight Banneret.—His Qualifications.—By whom created.—His Privileges —His relation to the Baron.—And incidentally of the War-cry and the Escutcheon.—The Knight.—Qualifications for Knighthood. — By whom created. — The Squirehood.—General View of the other Chapters on the Institutions of Chivalry PAGE 13

CHAPTER II.

THE EDUCATION OF A KNIGHT. THE CEREMONIES OF INAUGURATION AND OF DEGRADATION.

Description in Romances of Knightly Education.—Hawking and Hunting.—Education commenced at the age of Seven.—Duties of the Page.—Personal Service.—Love and Religion.—Martial Exercises.—The Squire.—His Duties of Personal Service.—Curious Story of a bold young Squire.—Various Titles of Squires.—Duties of the Squire in Battle.—Gallantry.—Martial Exercises.—Horsemanship.—Importance of Squires in the Battle Field.—Particularly at the Battle of Bovines.—Preparation for Knighthood.—The Anxiety of the Squire regarding the Character of the Knight from whom he was to receive the Accolade.—Knights made in the Battle Field.—Inconveniences of this.—Knights of Mines.—General Ceremonies of Degradation.—Ceremonies in England. 20

CHAPTER III.

THE EQUIPMENT.

Beauty of the chivalric Equipment.—The Lance.—The Pennon.—The Axe, Maule, and Martel.—The Sword.—Fondness of the Knight for it.—Swords in romances.—The Shield.—Various sorts of Mail.—Mail.—Mail and Plate.—Plate Harness.—The Scarf.—Surcoats.—Armorial Bearings.—Surcoats of the Military Orders.—The Dagger of Mercy.—Story of its Use.—Value of Inquiries into ancient Armour.—A precise Knowledge unattainable.—Its general Features interesting.—The broad Lines of the Subject.—Excellence of Italian Armour.—Armour of the Squire, &c.—Allegories made on Armour.—The Horse of the Knight . . PAGE 32

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHIVALRIC CHARACTER.

General Array of Knights.—Companions in Arms.—The Nature of a Cavalier's Valiancy.—Singular Bravery of Sir Robert Knowles.—Bravery incited by Vows.—Fantastic Circumstances.—The Humanities of Chivalric War.—Ransoming.—Reason of Courtesies in Batties.—Curious Pride of Knighthood.—Prisoners.—Instance of Knightly Honour.—Independence of Knights, and Knight Errantry.—Knights fought the Battles of other Countries.—English Knights dislike Wars in Spain.—Thier disgust at Spanish Wines.—Principles of their active Conduct.—Knightly independence consistent with Discipline.—Religion of the Knight.—His Devotion.—His Intolerance.—General Nature of his Virtue —Fidelity to Obligations.—Generousness.—Singular instance of it.—Romantic excess of it.—Liberality. —Humility.—Courtesy.— EVERY DAY LIFE OF THE KNIGHT.—Falconry.—Chess playing.—Story of a Knight's Love of Chess.—Minstrelsy. — Romances. — Conversation. — Nature and Form of Chivalric Entertainments.—Festival and Vow of the Pheasant 47

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

DAMES AND DAMSELS, AND LADY-LOVE.

Courtesy.—Education.—Music.—Graver Sciences. — Dress. — Knowledge of Medicine. — Every-day life of the Maiden.—Chivalric Love.—The Idolatry of the Knight's Passion —Bravery inspired by Love.—Character of Woman in the Eyes of a Knight.—Peculiar Nature of his Love.—Qualities of Knights admired by Women.—A tale of chivalric Love.—Constancy.—Absence of Jealousy.—Knights asserted by Arms their Mistress' Beauty.—Penitents of Love.—Other Peculiarities of chivalric Love.—The Passion universal.—Story of Aristotle.—Chivalric Love the Foe to feudal Distinctions—But preserved Religion.—When Attachments were formed. —Societies of Knights for the Defence of Ladies.—Knights of the Lady in the Green Field.—Customs in England.—Unchivalric to take Women Prisoners.—Morals of Chivalric Times.—Heroines of Chivalry.—Queen Philippa.—The Countess of March.—Tales of Jane of Mountfort and of Marzia degl' Ubaldini.—Nobleness of the chivalric Female Character . . . . . PAGE 65

CHAPTER VI.

TOURNAMENTS AND JOUSTS.

Beauty of Chivalric Sports.—Their Superiority to those of Greece and Rome.—Origin of Tournaments.—Reasons for holding them.—Practice in Arms.—Courtesy.—By whom they were held.—Qualifications for Tourneying.—Ceremonies of the Tournament.—Arrival of the Knights.—Publication of their names.—Reasons for it.—Disguised Knights.—The Lists.—Ladies the Judges of the Tournaments.—Delicate Courtesy at Tournaments.—Morning of the Sports.—Knights led by Ladies, who imitated the Dress of Knights.—Nature of Tourneying Weapons.—Knights wore Ladies' Favours.—The Preparation.—The Encounter.—What Lance Strokes won the Prize.—Conclusion of the Sports.—The Festival.—Delivery of the Prize.—Knights thanked by Ladies.—The Ball.—Liberality.—Tournaments opposed by the Popes.—The Opposition unjust.—The Joust.—Description of the Joust to the Utterance.—Joust between a Scotch and an English Knight.—Jousting for love of the Ladies.—A singular instance of it.—Joust between a French and an English Squire.—Admirable skill of Jousters.—Singular questions regarding Jousts.—An Earl of Warwick.—Celebrated Joust at St. Inglebertes'.—Joust between Lord Scales and the Bastard of Burgundy.—The Romance of Jousts.—The Passage of Arms.—Use of Tournaments and Jousts 87

CHAPTER VII.

THE RELIGIOUS AND MILITARY ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

General Principles of the Religious Orders.—Qualifications for them.—Use of these Orders to Palestine.—Modern History of the Knights Templars.—Their present Existence and State.—Religious Orders in Spain.—That of St. James.—Its Objects.—Change of its Objects.—Order of Calatrava.—Fine Chivalry of a Monk.—Fame of this Order.—Order of Alcantara.—Knights of the Lady of Mercy.—Knights of St. Michael.—Military Orders.—Imitations of the Religious Orders.—Instances in the Order of the Garter.—Few of the present Orders are of Chivalric Origin.—Order of the Bath.—Dormant Orders.—Order of the Band.—Its singular Rules.—Its noble Enforcement of Chivalric Duties towards Woman.—Order of Bourbon.—Strange Titles of Orders.—Fabulous Orders.—The Round Table.—Sir Launcelot.—Sir Gawain.—Order of the Stocking.—Origin of the phrase Blue Stocking . . . . . PAGE 109

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND, FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE REIGN OF EDWARD II.

Chivalry connected with Feudalism.—Stipendiary Knights.—Knighthood a compulsory Honour.—Fine Instance of Chivalry in the Reign of Edward I.—Effect of Chivalry in Stephen's Reign.—Troubadours and Romance Writers in the Reign of Henry II.—Chivalric Manners of the Time.—Cœur de Lion the first Chivalric King.—His Knightly Bearing. —John and Henry III.—Edward I.—His Gallantry at a tournament.—His unchivalric Cruelties.—He possessed no knightly Courtesy.—Picture of ancient Manners.—Edward II.—Chivalric Circumstance in the Battle of Bannockburn.—Singular Effect of Chivalry in the Reign of Edward II. . . 124

CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

Tournaments.—The Round Table—Order of the Garter.—Courtesy of Edward.—Prevalence of Chivalric Taste among all Classes.—English Archers.—The Black Prince.—Story of the King's Chivalry.—England regarded as the Seat of Honour.—Instance of this.—Chivalric Heroes in this Reign.—The Gestes and Prowesses of Sir Walter Manny.—Chi-

Digitized by Google

valric Vow of Sir Walter.—He fights for the Love of his Lady.—His Rescue of two Brother Knights.—Instance of his joyous Adventurousness.—His Gallantry before Auberoche.—His filial piety.—Story of Chivalric Manners.—The Gentle disposition of Manny.—His Importance at Edward's Court.—His remarkable Sagacity.—His Liberality.—His Death in 1372.—Buried in the Charter-House.—Heroism of Sir James Audley.—His Generosity.—Memoir of Sir John Chandos.—His Gallantry to Ladies.—Amusing instance of the Pride of Knighthood.—The importance of his Counsel at Poictiers.—His Exploits in Brittany—And in Spain.—Is made a Knight Banneret.—Quits the Black Prince.—But returns.—The remarkable Generousness of his Conduct to Lord Pembroke.—The last Circumstance of his Life.—General Grief at his Death . . PAGE 132

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE REIGN OF RICHARD II. TO THAT OF HENRY VIII.

Complaints of the unchivalric State of Richard's Court.—Influence of Chivalry on the national Character. — Scottish Chivalry. — Chivalric kindness of Robert Bruce.—Mutual Chivalry, between the Scotch and English Courts.—French Knight's Opinions of Scottish Chivalry.—Courtesies between English and Scottish Knights. — Chivalric Battle of Otterbourn.—Hotspur and the Douglas.—A cavaleresque Story.—Reign of Henry IV.—Chivalric Parley between him and the Duke of Orleans.— Henry's unchivalric Conduct at Shrewsbury.—Henry V.—Knights of the Bath.—Henry's love of chivalric Books.—His chivalric bearing.—Commencement of the Decline of Chivalry.—The Civil Wars injured Chivalry.—Caxton's Lamentation.—He exaggerates the Evil.—Many gallant English Knights.—Character of Henry VIII. with reference to Chivalry.—Tournaments in his Reign.—Field of the Cloth of Gold.—Introduction of Italian Literature favoured Romance.—Popularity of Chivalric Literature.—English Knights continued to break Lances for Ladies' Love.—State of Scottish Chivalry at this Period.—James IV.—Chivalric circumstances at Flodden Field. 151

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST YEARS OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND.

The Chivalric Feelings of the Nation supported by Spenser—And by Sir Philip Sidney.—Allusions to Sidney's Life—Particularly his kindly Consideration.—Chivalric Politeness of the Age of Elizabeth.—The Earl of Oxford.—Tilts in Greenwich Park.—Sir Henry Lee.—Chivalry reflected in the popular Amusements.—Change of Manners.—Reign of James the First.—Tournaments ceased on Prince Henry's Death.—Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury—Chivalric Fame of his Family—His Character.—His Inferiority to the Knights of yore.—Decline of Chivalric Education.—Important Change of Knighthood by the Parliament of Charles the First.—Application of Chivalric honours to men of civil Station—Knights made in the Field.—Carpet Knights.—Knights of the Bath.—Full Account of the Ancient Ceremonies of creating Knights of the Bath . PAGE 169

CHAPTER XII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN FRANCE.

Chivalry in Baronial Castles.—Chivalry injured by Religious Wars.—Beneficial Influence of Poetry and Romance. — Chivalric Brilliancy of the Fourteenth Century.—Brittany.—Du Guesclin.—Romantic Character of his early years.—His knightly conduct at Rennes.—Gallantry at Cochetel.— Political Consequences of his Chivalry.—He leads an Army into Spain—And Changes the Fortunes of that Kingdom.—Battle of Navaret.—Du Guesclin Prisoner—Treatment of him by the Black Prince—Ransomed—Is made Constable of France.—Recovers the Power of the French Monarchy.—Companionship in Arms between Du Guesclin and Olivier De Clisson.—Du Guesclin's Death before Randon—His Character.—Decline of Chivalry—Proof of it.—Little Chivalry in the Second Series of French and English Wars.—Combats of Pages.—Further Decay of chivalry.—Abuses in conferring Knighthood.—Burgundy—Its Chivalry.—The Romantic nature of the Burgundian Tournaments.—Last Gleams of Chivalry in France—Life of Bayard. — Francis I. — Extinction of Chivalry 182

CHAPTER XIII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN SPAIN.

General Nature of Spanish Chivalry.—Religion and Heroism. — Gallantry. — Blending of Spanish and Oriental Manners.—Its beneficial Tendencies.—Peculiarities of Spanish Chivalry. — Forms of Knighthood. — Various Ranks of Knights.—Spanish Poetry.—Heroes of Chivalry.—Pelayo.—Bernardo del Carpio—And incidentally of Charlemagne's Expedition into Spain.—The Life of the Cid.—His early ferocious Heroism.—His singular

Digitized by Google

Marriage.—Enters the Service of King Ferdinand.—The Cid's Chivalric Gallantry.—He is knighted.—Death of King Ferdinand.—The Cid becomes the Knight of Sancho, King of Castile.—Mixture of Evil and Good in the Cid's Character.—Supports the King in his Injustice.—The Cid's Romantic Heroism.—Sancho's further Injustice opposed by him.—Death of Sancho.—Instance of the Cid's virtuous boldness.—Character of Alfonso, Successor of Sancho.—Story of his Chivalric Bearing.—The Cid's second Marriage.—Is banished from Alfonso's Court.—Becomes the Ally of the Moors—But recalled.—Is banished again.—Singular Story of the Cid's unknightly Meanness.—Fortunes of the Cid during his Exile.—The Cid's chivalric Nobleness and Generosity.—Is recalled by Alfonso.—The Cid captures Toledo—And Valentia.—Story of Spanish Manners.—The Cid's unjust Conduct to the Moors.—The unchivalric Character of the Cid's Wife and Daughters.—The Cid recalled by Alfonso.—The Marriages of his Daughters.—Basely treated by their Husbands.—Cortez at Toledo to decide the Cause.—Picture of Ancient Manners.—Death of the Cid.—His Character—Fate of his good horse.—Spanish Chivalry after his Death.—Gallantry of a Knight.—The Merits of Missals decided by Battle.—Passage of Arms at Orbigo.—Knights travel and joust for Ladies' Love.—Extinction of Spanish chivalry . . . . . PAGE 200

CHAPTER XIV.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

Chivalry did not affect the public History of Germany.—Its influence on Imperial Manners.—Intolerance and Cruelty of German Knights.—Their Harshness to their Squires.—Avarice of the Germans.—Little Influence of German Chivalry.—A remarkable Exception to this.—A Female Tournament.—Maximilian, the only chivalric Emperor of Germany.—Joust between him and the French Knight.—Edict of Frederick III. destroyed Chivalry.—CHIVALRY IN ITALY.—Lombards carried Chivalry thither.—Stories of chivalric Gallantry.—But little martial Chivalry in Italy.—Condottieri.—Chivalry in the North.—Italians excellent Armourers but bad Knights.—Chivalry in the South.—Curious Circumstances attending Knighthood at Naples.—Mode of creating Knights in Italy generally.—Political Use of Knighthood.—Chivalric literature.—Chivalric sports PAGE 222

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE MERITS AND EFFECTS OF CHIVALRY 233

Digitized by Google

THE

HISTORY

OF

CHIVALRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND FIRST APPEARANCES OF CHIVALRY IN EUROPE.

General Nature of Chivalry.—Military and Moral Chivalry.—Origin of Chivalry.—Usages of the Germans.—Election of Soldiers.—Fraternity.—Dignity of Obedience.—Gallantry.—The Age of Charlemagne.—Chivalry modified by Religion.—Ceremonies of Anglo-Saxon Inauguration.—Chivalry sanctioned by Councils, and regarded as a Form of Christianity.—Nature of Chivalric Nobility.—Its Degrees.—Knight Banneret.—His Qualifications.—By whom created.—His Privileges.—His relation to the Baron.—And incidentally of the War-cry and the Escutcheon.—The Knight.—Qualifications for Knighthood. — By whom created. — The Squirehood.—General View of the other Chapters on the Institutions of Chivalry.

There is little to charm the imagination in the first ages of Chivalry. No plumed steeds, no warrior bearing on his crested helm the favour of his lady bright, graced those early times. All was rudeness and gloom. But the subject is not altogether without interest, as it must ever be curious to mark the causes and the first appearances in conduct of any widely spread system of opinions.

The martial force of the people who occupied northern and central Europe in the time of the Romans, was chiefly composed of infantry;* but afterwards a great though imperceptible change took place, and, during all the long period which forms, in the historic phrase, the middle ages, cavalry was the strongest arm of military power. Terms, expressive of this martial array, were sought for in its distinguishing circumstances. Among the ruins of the Latin language, *caballus* signified a horse, *caballarius* a horseman, and *caballicare*, to ride; and from these words all the languages that were formed on a Latin basis, derived their phrases descriptive of military duties on horseback. In all languages of Teutonic origin, the same circumstance was expressed by words literally signifying service. The German *knight*, the Saxon *cnight*, are synonymous to the French *cavalier*, the Italian *cavaliere*, and the Spanish *caballero*. The word *rider* also designated the same person, preceded by, or standing without, the word *knight*.

In the kingdoms, which sprang from the ruins of the Roman Empire, every king, baron, and person of estate was a knight; and therefore the whole face of Europe was overspread with cavalry. Considered in this aspect, the knighthood and the feudalism of Europe were synonymous and co-existent. But there was a chivalry within this chivalry; a moral and personal knighthood; not the well-ordered assemblage of the instruments of ambition, but a military barrier against oppression and tyranny, a corrective of feudal despotism and injustice. Something like this description of knighthood may be said to have existed in all ages and countries. Its generousness may be paralleled in Homeric times, and

* Tacitus Germania, sec. 6. Cæsar de Bello Gallico, lib. i., s. 48.

Digitized by Google

vice has never reigned entirely without control. But the chivalry, the gallant and Christian chivalry of Europe, was purer and brighter than any preceding condition of society; for it established women in her just rank in the moral world, and many of its principles of action proceeded from a divine source, which the classical ancients could not boast of.

Some of the rules and maxims of chivalry had their origin in that state of society in which the feudal system arose; and regarded particularly in a military light, we find chivalry a part of the earliest condition of a considerable part of the European world. The bearing of arms was never a matter of mere private choice. Among the Germans, it rested with the state to declare a man qualified to serve his country in arms. In an assembly of the chiefs of his nation, his father, or a near relation, presented a shield and a javelin to a young and approved candidate for martial honours, who from that moment was considered as a member of the commonwealth, and ranked as a citizen. In northern as well as in central Europe, both in Scandinavia and Germany, the same principle was observed; and a young man at the age of fifteen became an independent agent, by receiving a sword, a buckler, and a lance, at some public meeting.*

The spirit of clanship, or fraternity, which ran through the chivalry of the middle ages, is of the remotest antiquity. It existed in Germany, in Scandinavia, and also in Gaul.† In all these countries, every young man, when adorned with his military weapons, entered the train of some chief; but he was rather his companion than his follower; for, however numerous were the steps and distinctions of service, a noble spirit of equality ran through them all. These generous youths formed the bulwark of their leader in war, and were his ornament in peace. This spirit of companionship showed itself in all its power and beauty in the field. It was disgraceful for a prince to be surpassed in valour by his companions; their military deeds were to be heroic, but the lustre of them was never to dim the brightness of his own fame. The chief fought for victory, the followers fought for their chief. The defence of the leader in battle, to die with him rather than to leave him, were, in the minds of the military fathers of Europe, obvious and necessary corollaries of these principles. The spirit of companionship burnt more fiercely in remote ages, than in times commonly called chivalric, for if, by the chance of war a person was thrown into the hands of an enemy, his military companions would surrender themselves prisoners, thinking it disgraceful to live in security and indolence, when their chief and associate was in misery.*

And to bring the matter home to English readers, it may be mentioned, that in the history of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, many instances are recorded where vassals refused to survive their lord. Cyneheard, brother of the deposed king Sigebyrcht, slew the usurper Cynewulf; and though he offered freedom to the attendants of the slain, yet they all preferred death to submission to a new lord, and they died in a vain and wild endeavour to revenge him. Immediately afterwards fortune frowned on Cyneheard, and his eighty-four companions, save one, were slain, though liberty had been offered to them; but declaring that their generosity was not inferior to the generosity of the attendants of Cynewulf, they perished in a hopeless battle.†

The feeling which, in chivalric times, became designated as the dignity of obedience, may be traced in these circumstances, but it is more clearly shown in a singular record of the domestic manners of ancient Europe; for we learn from Athenæus, in his treatise of the suppers of the Celts, that it was the custom of the Gaulish youths to stand behind the seats, and to attend upon their fathers during the principal daily meal.‡ Here we see the germ, if not of the duties of the squire to the knight, yet of the feeling which suggested their performance. The beautiful subordination of chivalry had its origin in the domestic relations of life; obedience became

* Tacitus Germania, s. 13. Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol. i., p. 197.

† Tacitus Germania. Cæsar, lib. 6, s. 14.

* Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 16, c. 13.

† Chron. Saxon, 57, &c. Florence, ad an. 784. William of Malmsbury, 7.

‡ Athenæus, lib. iv., c. 36.

Digitized by Google

virtuous when nature sanctioned it, and there could be no loss of personal consideration in a youth performing services which his own father had performed, and which, as years and circumstances advanced, would be rendered to himself.

The gallantry of knighthood, that quality which distinguishes, and distinguishes so much to its advantage, the modern from the ancient world, was not created by any chivalric institution. We know indeed that it was cradled in the same sentiments which nursed the other principles of chivalry, but its birth is lost in the remoteness of ages; and I would rather dwell in my ignorance of the precise period of its antiquity, than think with Plutarch that the feeling arose from a judicious opinion delivered by some women on occasion of a particular dispute between a few of the Celtic tribes.* It was in truth the virtue of the sex, and not any occasional or accidental opinion, that raised them to their high and respectful consideration. The Roman historian marked it as a peculiarity among the Germans, that marriage was considered by them as a sacred institution,† and that a man confined himself to the society of one wife. The mind of Tacitus was filled with respect for the virtuous though unpolished people of the north; and, reverting his eyes to Rome, the describer of manners becomes the indignant satirist, and he exclaims, that no one in Germany dares to ridicule the holy ordinance of marriage, or to call an infringement of its laws a compliance with the manners of the age.‡ In the earlier times, when the Cimbri invaded Italy, and were worsted by Marius, the female Teutonic captives wished to be placed among the vestal virgins, binding themselves to perpetual chastity, but the Romans could not admire or sympathize with such lofty-mindedness, and the women had recourse to death, the last sad refuge of their virtue. Strabo picturesquely describes venerable and hoary-headed prophetesses seated at the council of the Cimbri, dressed in long linen vestments of shining white. They were not only embassadresses, but were often entrusted with the charge of governing kingdoms.* The courage of the knight of chivalry was inspired by the lady of his affections, a feature of character clearly deducible from the practice among the German nations, of women mingling in the field of battle with their armed brothers, fathers, and husbands. Women were always regarded as incentives to valour, and when warring with a nation of different manners, the German general could congratulate his soldiers on having motives to courage, which the enemy did not possess.† The warrior of the north, like the hero of chivalry, hoped for female smiles from his skill in athletic and martial exercises; and we may take the anecdote as an instance of the general manners of European antiquity, that the chief anxiety of a Danish champion, who had lost his chin and one of his cheeks by a single stroke of a sword, was, how he should be received by the Danish maidens, when his personal features had been thus dreadfully marred.—"The Danish girls will not now willingly or easily give me kisses, if I should perhaps return home," was his complaint.

Herald the Valiant was one of the most eminent adventurers of his age. He had slain mighty men; and after sweeping the seas of the north as a conqueror, he descended to the Mediterranean, and the shores of Africa. But a greater power now opposed him, and he was taken prisoner, and detained for some time at Constantinople. He endeavoured to beguile his gloomy solitude by song; but his muse gave him no joy, for he complains that the reputation he had acquired by so many hazardous exploits, by his skill in a single combat, riding, swimming, gliding along the ice, darting, rowing, and guiding a ship through the rocks, had not been able to make any impression on Elissiff, or Elizabeth, the beautiful daughter of Yarilas king of Russia.‡

Such were the features of the ancient character of Europe, that formed the

* Treatise on the Virtue of the Female Sex.

† Tacitus Germania, s. 18, c. 19. ‡ Ibid.

* Strabo, lib. iv. Tacitus Historia, lib. iv., c. 61, 65, Pomponius Mela, lib. iii., c. 6.

† Tacitus, Hist. lib. iv., c. 18. Life of Agricola, s. 32. Germania, s. 7.

‡ Barthol, p. 54, as cited by Warton, Dissert. I. Of the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe, in the first volume of the late admirable edition of his History of English Poetry.

Digitized by Google

basis of the chivalry of the middle ages; such was chivalry in its rude, unpolished state, the general character of the whole people rather than the moral chastener of turbulence and ferocity. From receiving his weapons in an assembly of the nation; associating in clans; protecting and revering women; performing acts of service, when affection and duty commanded them: from these simple circumstances and qualities, the most beautiful form of manners arose, that has ever adorned the history of man. It is impossible to mark the exact time when these elements were framed into that system of thought and action which we call Chivalry. Knighthood was certainly a feature and distinction of society before the days of Charlemagne, and its general prevalence in his time is very curiously proved, by the permission which he gave to the governor of Friesland to make knights, by girding them with a sword, and giving them a blow.*

But the key-stone of the arch was wanting, and religion alone could furnish it. A new world of principles and objects was introduced. The defence of the church was one great apparent aim of knightly enterprise, and on this principle, narrow and selfish as it was, many of the charities of Christianity were established. The sword was blessed by the priest, before it was delivered to the young warrior. By what means this amalgamation was effected, we know not; the less interesting matter, the date of the circumstance, can be more easily ascertained. It was somewhere between the ninth and the eleventh centuries. It surely was not the custom in the days of Charlemagne, for he girt the military sword on his son Louis the Good, agreeably to the rude principles of ancient Germanic chivalry,† without any religious ceremonies; and a century afterwards we read of the Saxon monarch of England, Edward the Elder, clothing Athelstan in a soldier's dress of scarlet, and fastening round him a girdle ornamented with precious stones, in which a Saxon sword in a sheath of gold was inserted.* In the century following, however, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, we meet with the story of Hereward, a very noble Anglo-Saxon youth, being knighted by the Abbot of Peterborough. He made confession of his sins, and after he had received absolution, he earnestly prayed to be made a legitimate *miles* or knight.

It was the custom of the English, continues the historian, for every one who wished to be consecrated into the legitimate militia, to confess his sins to a bishop, abbot, monk, or other priest, in the evening that preceded the day of his consecration, and to pass the night in the church, in prayer, devotion, and mortifications. On the next morning it was his duty to hear mass, to offer his sword on the altar, and then, after the Gospel had been read, the priest blessed the sword, and placed it on the neck of the *miles*, with his benediction. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was then communicated to the knight.† This passage, though professedly descriptive only of the military customs of England, may be applied to the general state of Europe, with the exception of Normandy, whose people despised the religious part of the ceremony. But this feeling of dislike did not endure through all ages, for there is abundant evidence to prove that in the reign of the Norman dynasty in England, the ceremonies of knighthood were religious as well as military; and in the same, the eleventh century, the usage was similar over all Continental Europe.

The eleventh century is a very important epoch in the history of chivalry; for it was declared by the celebrated Council of Clermont (which authorized the first Crusade), that every person of noble birth, on attaining twelve years of age, should take a solemn oath before the bishop of his diocess, to defend to the uttermost the oppressed, the widows, and orphans; that women of noble birth, both married and single, should enjoy his especial care; and that nothing should be wanting in him to render travelling safe, and to destroy tyranny. In this decree we observe, that all

* It is also curious that this blow was said to have been customary.—"Dato eisdem, sicut consuetudinis est, manu colapho."

† Not exactly according to the form, for by this time a belt with a sword inserted was girded round the military candidate, instead of delivering a javelin to him. See the preceding paragraph.

* William of Malmsbury, lib. ii., c. 6.

† Ingulph, p. 512.

Digitized by Google

the humanities of chivalry were sanctioned by legal and ecclesiastical power; and that it was intended they should be spread over the whole face of Christendom, in order to check the barbarism and ferocity of the times.

The form of chivalry was martial; but its objects were both religious and social, and the definition of the word from military circumstances ceased to express its character. The power of the clergy was shown in a singular manner. Chivalry was no longer a soldierly array, but it was called the Order, the Holy Order, and a character of seriousness and solemity was given to it.* It was accounted an honourable office, above all offices, orders, and acts of the world, except the order of priesthood, for that order appertained to the holy sacrament of the altar. The knightly and clerical characters were every where considered as convertible, and the writers of romances faithfully reflected manners, when their hero at the commencement of the tale was a Sir Knight, and when at the close of his quests we find him a Sir Priest:

"And soothly it was said by common fame,
So long as age enabled him thereto,
That he had been a man of mickle name,
Renowned much in arms and derring do.
But being aged now, and weary too
Of war's delight, and world's contentious toil,
The name of Knighthood he did disavow;
And hanging up his arms and warlike spoil,
From all this world's incumbrance did himself assoil."*

Knighthood was an institution perfectly peculiar to the military and social state of our ancestors. There was no analogy between the knights of chivalry and the equites of Rome, for pecuniary estate was absolutely necessary for the latter; whereas, though the European cavalier was generally a man of some possessions, yet he was often a person promoted into the order of chivalry, solely as a reward for his redoubted behaviour in battle. The Roman equites discharged civil functions regarding the administration of justice and the farming of the public revenue; but the chivalry of the middle ages had no such duties to perform. Knighthood was also distinct from nobility; for the nobility of Europe were the governors and lords of particular districts of a country, and although originally they held their dignities only for life, yet their title soon became hereditary. But knighthood was essentially and always a personal distinction. A man's chivalry died with him. It was conferred upon noblemen and kings, not being like their other titles the subject of inheritance. It was not absorbed in any other title of rank, and the common form of address, Sir* King, shows its high consideration. In the writs of summons to parliament, the word *Chevalier* sometimes followed the baronial title, and more frequently the barons were styled by their martial designation, than named by the titles of their baronies.†

There were three degrees in the Chivalry of Europe, Knights Banneret, Knights, and Esquires.

A soldier must have passed through the ranks of esquire and knight, before he could be classed with the knights-banneret. That high dignity could only be possessed by a knight who had served for a length of years in the wars, and with distinction, and who had a considerable retinue, of men-at-arms, and other

* Caxton, Fayts of Arms and Chivalry, chapter entitled, "Of the Honour that ought to be done to a Knight."

† Spencer's Fairy Queen, book v., canto 5, st. 37. The romance of the Morte D'Arthur says, that in early times there were no hermits, but who had been men of worship and prowess; "and the hermits held great household and refreshed people that were in distress." Lib. 18, c. 10.

* The reader will find in Johnson's Dictionary the etymology of *Sir*. When this word, acknowledging power and superiority, was first used as the title of chivalry, I do not know. Instances exist as high as the reign of Henry II.

† Coke, Instit. 4. In the Reports of the Lords' Committees respecting the Peerage, (printed 2d July, 1821,) doubts are often expressed regarding the meaning of the word Banneret. A little attention to the difference between the personal nobility of chivalry, and the nobility which arose as a franchise appurtenant to land, would have prevented the entertaining of such doubts, and the conclusion might have been drawn from principles, instead of being guessed from precedent, that the title of banneret had no relation to the dignity of Lord of Parliament. The Lord's Committees seem surprised that barons should sometimes have had the addition of knights, and at other times of bannerets; but in truth chevalier was the title which comprehended all others, and like the word 'Lord,' was used in a general sense.

Digitized by Google

soldiers. To avoid the inconveniences of too minute a division of the martial force of a country, every knight-banneret ought to have had fifty* knights and squires under his command, each being attended by one or more horse soldiers, armed with the cross-bow, or with the long-bow and axe. Several followers on foot completed the equipment. But as we often meet with instances of elevating men of very few followers* to the rank of knight's-banneret, it is probable that kings usurped the right of conferring the distinction upon their favourites, or men of fame, not choosing that any title of merit should be demanded as a right, or that the royal name should be used only as a passive instrument; for a knight who had proved his chivalry and power, could demand from his sovereign the distinction of banneret. The laws and usages of the world allowed the well-tried and nobly attended soldier to carry his emblazoned pennon to the constable or marshal of the army before or after a battle, and in the field of contest itself, and require leave to raise his banner. A herald exhibited the record of his claim to the distinction, and the leader of the forces cut off the end of the pennon, and this military ensign then became a square banner. A brief exhortation to valiancy and honour was generally added by the constable or herald. These were the whole ceremonies of creation.

The privileges of a knight-banneret were considerable. He did not fight under the standard of any baron, but he formed his soldiers under his own. Like the rest of the feudal force, he was subject to the commands of the king; but his pride was not galled by being obliged to obey the behests of men of his own rank.

Every Baron had his banner, and a feudal array of knights, men-at-arms, and others, was numbered by its banners. The banneret and the baron were therefore soldiers of equal authority. The banneret, too, like the baron, had his words of courage, his cry of arms, which he shouted before a battle, in order to animate his soldiers to the charge, and whose sound, heard in the moment of direst peril, rallied the scattered troops by the recollection of the glories of their commander's house, and their own former achievements. The war-cry was also the under-written ornament of the armorial shield, and worked on the surcoat and banner, and was carved on the tomb both of the knight-banneret and the baron. Each of these representatives of chivalry and nobility had his square escutcheon. The wife of a banneret was styled *une dame bannerette*, and the general title of his family was a *hostel bannière*.

The second and most numerous class of chivalric heroes consisted of Knights, who were originally called Bas-Chevaliers, in contradiction to the first class, but in the course of time the word bachelor designated rather the esquire, the candidate for chivalry, than the cavalier himself. These knights of the second class were in Spain called *Cavalleros*, in distinction from the *riccos hombres*, or knights-banneret; and in France, the illiberal and degrading title of *pauvres hommes* was sometimes applied to them, to mark their inferiority to the bannerets.

A general qualification for knighthood was noble or gentle birth, which, in its widest signification, expressed a state of independence. Noblemen and gentlemen were words originally synonymous, describing the owners of fiefs. In countries where there were other forms of tenure, some military merit in the occupiers of land seems to have been necessary for elevation to the class of gentlemen. The mere frankelein was certainly not entitled to the designation of gentle; but if he became a distinguished man, an honorary rank was given to the family, and they were esteemed noble.*

* See Du Cange, Dissertation 9, on Joinville. This learned commentator seems inclined to confound knights-banneret with barons, chivalry with nobility; and a herd of subsequent writers refining on his errror, have gravely placed knights banneret as an order or class of society mediate between Nobility and Knighthood.

† Some fortune was, however, always thought necessary for the support of the dignity of knight-banneret. In the 28th of Edward III. John de Cobham was made a banneret, and had a grant of an annuity of 100 marks, out of the issues of the county of Norfolk, expressly for the better support of that dignity. Dugdale's Baronage, vol. ii., p. 66. Many similar instances are mentioned in the Parliamentary Rolls.

* A note of Waterhouse on Fortescue will

Digitized by Google

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that that distinction could alone be obtained by military achievements; for in the early periods of society, the only path to glory was stained with blood. The gentility of a father was more regarded than that of a mother;* and in strictness, if a man were not noble on his paternal side, his lord might cause his spurs to be cut off on a dunghill.† The amount of estate necessary for knighthood was not regulated by any chivalric institution. But the expense of the order was by no means inconsiderable. His inauguration was a scene of splendour; and liberality was one of the chiefest duties of his character. He could not travel in quest of adventures without some charge,‡ and his squire and other personal attendants were of course maintained by him. Though a man, says Froissart, be never so rich, men of arms and war waste all; for he that will have service of men of war, they must be paid truly their wages, or else they will do nothing available.§ The knight's harness for the working day was not without its ornaments; and the tournament was rendered splendid by the brilliancy of his armour and his steed's caparisons. There was always a rivalry of expense among knights who formed an expedition; and of all the recorded instances of this feeling, perhaps the most interesting one is furnished by Froissart. Speaking of a projected invasion of England by the French about the year 1386, he says, that gold and silver were no more spared than though they had rained out of the clouds, or been skimmed from the sea. The great lords of France sent their servants to Sluse, to apparel and make ready their provisions and ships, and to furnish them with every thing needful. Every man garnished his ship, and painted it with his arms. Painters had then a good season, for they had whatever they desired. They made banners, pennons, and standards of silk so goodly, that it was a marvel to behold them; also they painted the masts of their ships from the one end to the other, glittering with gold, and devices, and arms; and especially the Lord Guy de la Tremouille garnished his ship richly; the paintings cost more than two thousand francs.*

We have seen that originally a body of soldiers was selected by the state from the general mass of the people. Afterwards, kings and nobles in their several jurisdictions maintained the power of creation. It was also assumed by the clergy, but not retained long; nor were they anxious to recover it, for, as they assisted in the religious ceremonies of inauguration, they possessed a considerable share of power by the milder means of influence. Knighthood never altogether lost its character of being a distinction, a reward of merit, presumed, indeed, rather than proved, in the original instances which have been mentioned. But though it was often bestowed as an ornament of custom on the nobility and gentry of a state, yet it often was the bright gourdon of achievements in arms. Of military merit every knight was supposed to be a sufficient judge; and therefore every knight had the power of bestowing its reward. Men-at-arms and other soldiers were often exalted to the class of knights; and the honour was something more than a chimera of the imagination; for the title and consideration of a gentleman immediately accompanied the creation.† Thus, in the time of Richard II., the

illustrate this. "The title of franklein is 'good man;' and yet they have oft knights' estates. Many are called by courtesy 'masters,' and even 'gentlemen,' and their sons are educated in the inns of court, and adopted into the orders of knights and squires."

* Illegitimacy seems not to have been a matter of the slightest consequence. Froissart, ii. 26.

† Favyn., i. 6.

‡ When Don Quixote was dubbed a knight, the landlord asked him whether he had any money. "Not a cross," replied the knight, "for I never read in any history of chivalry, that any knight-errant ever carried money about him."—"Respodino Don Quixote que no traia blanca, porque él nunca habia leido en las historias de los caballeros andantes, que ninguno los hubiese traido." This was a very singular error in Cervantes, for in Amadis de Gaul, which he characterizes as the best work of its class, and which is evidently one of his text-books, we read that the queen gave Adrian the Dwarf enough money to last Amadis de Gaul his master for a whole year. Book III., c. 6.

§ Froissart, i, c. 448.

* Froissart, ii., c. 49.

† Thus, as Bracton observes, if a villain be made a knight, he is thereby immediately enfranchised, and consequently accounted a gentleman, l. iv., f. 198, b.

Digitized by Google

governor of Norwich, called Sir Robert Sale, was no gentleman born, says Froissart; but he had the grace to be reputed sage and valiant in arms, and for his valiantness, King Edward had made him a knight. The same sovereign also knighted a man-at-arms, who had originally been a tailor, and who, after the conclusion of the king's wars in France, crossed the Alps into Italy, and under the name of Sir John Hawkwood, headed the company of White or English adventurers, so famous in the Italian wars.*

The third and last class of chivalry was the Squirehood. It was not composed of young men who carried the shields of knights, and were learning the art of war; but the squires were a body of efficient soldiers, inferior in rank to the knight, and superior to the men-at-arms.† They had been originally intended for the higher classes of chivalry, but various considerations induced them to remain in the lowest rank. It was a maxim in chivalry, that a man had better be a good esquire than a poor knight. Many an esquire, therefore, declined the honour of knighthood, on account of the slenderness of his revenues. Edward III., during his wars in France, would have knighted Collart Dambreticourte, the esquire of his own person; but the young man declined the honour, for, to use his own simple phrase, he could not furnish his helmet.‡ Barons, knights, and esquires, form Froissart's frequent description of the parts of an army; and although there were many young men in the field, who, released from their duties on knights, were aiming at distinction, yet there were many more who remained squires during all their military career, and therefore became recognised as a part of the chivalric array. Some men of small landed estate, wishing to avoid the expenses and the duties of knighthood, remained esquires. They lost nothing of real power by their prudence, for they were entitled to lead their vassals into the field of battle under a penoncele, or small triangular streamer, as the knight led his under a pennon, or a banneret his under a banner. Military honours and commands also could be reached by the squirehood, as well as by the knighthood of a country. Both classes were considered gentle, and were entitled to wear coat armour.

Such was the general form of the personal nobility of Chivalry. Some parts of the outline varied in different countries, as will be seen when we watch its progress through Europe; but previously to that inquiry, the education, the duties, and the equipment of the knight require description; and as *loyauté aux dames* is the motto alike of the writers and the readers of works on Chivalry, I shall make no apology for suspending the historical investigation, while I endeavour to portray the lady-love of the gallant cavalier, and delay my steps in that splendid scene of beauty's power, the Tournament.

CHAPTER II.

THE EDUCATION OF A KNIGHT. THE CEREMONIES OF INAUGURATION AND OF DEGRADATION.

Description in Romances of Knightly Education.—Hawking and Hunting.—Education commenced at the age of Seven.—Duties of the Page.—Personal Service.—Love and Religion.—Martial Exercises.—The Squire.—His Duties of Personal Service.—Curious Story of a bold young Squire.—Various Titles of Squires.—Duties of the Squire in Battle.—Gallantry.—Martial Exercises.—Horsemanship.—Importance of Squires in the Battle Field.—Particularly at the Battle of Bovines.—Preparation for Knighthood.—The Anxiety of the Squire regarding the Character of the Knight from whom he was to receive the Accolade.—Knights made in the Battle Field.—Inconveniences of this.—Knights of Mines.—General Ceremonies of Degradation.—Ceremonies in England.

The romances of Chivalry, in their picturesque and expressive representation of manners, present us with many interesting glimpses of the education in knighthood of the feudal nobility's chil-

* Froissart, i. 384.

† Du Cange says, the third order of Chivalry consisted of the Esquires; but he evidently thinks they were the personal attendants of knights, for he calls them infancons or damoiseaux. He does not seem to have thought that a grave old squire ever existed.

‡ —— "Mais le dit escuyer s'excusa; et dit qu'il ne pouvoit trouver son bacinet."—Froissart, i., 211.

Digitized by Google

dren. The romance of Sir Tristrem sings thus :

"Now hath Rohant in ore,*
Tristrem, and is full blithe,
The childe he set to lore,
And lernd him al so swithe ;†
In bok while he was thore
He stodieth ever that stithe,‡
Though that bi him wore
Of him were ful blithe,
That bold.
His craftes gan he kithe,§
Oyaines‖ hem when he wold.

"Fiftene yere he gan him fede,
Sir Rohant the trewe ;
He taught him ich alede¶
Of ich maner of glewe ;**
And everich playing thede,
Old lawes and newe.
On hunting oft he yede,††
To swich alawe he drewe,
Al thus ;
More he couthe‡‡ of veneri
Than couthe Manerious."

Very similar to this picture is the description of the education of Kyng Horn, in the romance which bears his name.

"Stiward tac thou here,
My fundling for to lere
Of thine mestere,
Of wode and of ryvere,
Ant toggen o' the harpe,
With is nayles sharpe ;
Ant tech him alle the listes
That thou ever wystes
Byfore me to kerven,
Ant of my coupe to serven ;
Ant his feren devyse
With ous other servise.
Horn, child, thou understand
Tech him of harpe and of song."§§

For only one more extract from the old romances, shall I claim the indulgence of my readers in the words of the minstrel,

"Mekely, lordynges gentyll and fre,
Lysten awhile and herken to me."

The life of Sir Ipomydon is a finished picture of knightly history. His foster-father, Sir Tholomew,

——— "A clerk he toke
That taught the child upon the boke
Both to synge and to rede,
And after he taught him other dede.
Afterwards to serve in halle,
Both to great and to small.
Before the king meat to kerve
Hye and low feyre to serve.
Both of houndis and hawkis game,
After he taught him all and same,
In se, in field, and eke in river,
In wood to chase the wild deer ;
And in the field to ride a steed,
That all men had joy of his deed."

The mystery of rivers and the mystery of woods were important parts of knightly education. The mystery of woods was hunting ; the mystery of rivers was not fishing, but hawking, an expression which requires a few words of explanation. In hawking, the pursuit of water-fowls afforded most diversion. Chaucer says that he could

"Ryde on hawking by the river,
With grey gos hawk on hand."

The favourite bird of chase was the heron, whose peculiar flight is not horizontal, like that of field birds, but perpendicular. It is wont to rise to a great height on finding itself the object of pursuit, while its enemy, using equal efforts to out-tower it, at length gains the advantage, swoops upon the heron with prodigious force, and strikes it to the ground. The amusement of hawking, therefore, could be viewed without the spectators moving far from the river's side where the game was sprung ; and from that circumstance it was called the mystery of rivers.*

But I shall attempt no further to describe in separate portions the subjects of knightly education, and to fill up the sketches of the old romances ; for those sketches, though correct, present no complete outline, and the military exercises are altogether omitted. We had better trace the cavalier, through the gradations of his course, in the castle of his lord.

The education of a knight generally commenced at the age of seven or eight years,† for no true lover of chivalry

* Favour.
† Soon.
‡ Diligently.
§ Attempted.
‖ Against.
¶ Rule.
** The minstrelsy art.
†† Went.
‡‡ Knew.
§§ Geste of Kyng Horn, v. 233.

* Mr. Rose's note on the Romance of Partenopex of Blois, p. 51.
† Caxton, Fayt of Armes and of Chyvalrye, c. 9. Mémoires du bon Messire Jean le Maingre,

Digitized by Google

wished his children to pass their time in idleness and indulgence. At a baronial feast, a lady in the full glow of maternal pride pointed to her offspring, and demanded of her husband whether he did not bless Heaven for having given him four such fine and promising boys. "Dame," replied her lord, thinking her observation ill timed and foolish, "so help me God and Saint Martin, nothing gives me greater sorrow and shame than to see four great sluggards, who do nothing but eat and drink and waste their time in idleness and folly." Like other children of gentle birth, therefore, the boys of this noble Duke Guerin of Montglaive, in spite of their mother's wishes, commenced their chivalric exercises.* In some places there were schools appointed by the nobles of the country, but most frequently their own castles served. Every feudal lord had his court, to which he drew the sons and daughters of the poorer gentry of his domains; and his castle was also frequented by the children of men of equal rank with himself, for (such was the modesty and courtesy of chivalry) each knight had generally some brother in arms, whom he thought better fitted than himself to grace his children with noble accomplishments.

The duties of the boy for the first seven years of his service were chiefly personal. If sometimes the harsh principles of feudal subordination gave rise to such service, it oftener proceeded from the friendly relations of life; and as in the latter case it was voluntary, there was no loss of honourable consideration in performing it. The dignity of obedience, that principle which blends the various shades of social life, and which had its origin in the patriarchal manners of early Europe, was now fostered in the castles of the feudal nobility. The light-footed youth attended the lord and his lady in the hall, and followed them in all their exercises of war and pleasure; and it was considered unknightly for a cavalier to wound a page in battle. He also acquired the rudiments of those incongruous subjects, religion, love, and war, so strangely blended in chivalry; and generally the intellectual and moral education of the boy was given by the ladies of the court.

From the lips of the ladies the gentle page learned both his catechism and the art of love, and as the religion of the day was full of symbols, and addressed to the senses, so the other feature of his devotion was not to be nourished by abstract contemplation alone. He was directed to regard some one lady of the court as the type of his heart's future mistress; she was the centre of all his hopes and wishes; to her he was obedient, faithful, and courteous.

While the young Jean de Saintre was a page of honour at the court of the French king, the Dame des Belles Cousines inquired of him the name of the mistress of his heart's affections. The simple youth replied, that he loved his lady mother, and next to her, his sister Jacqueline was dear to him. "Young man," rejoined the lady, "I am not speaking of the affection due to your mother and sister; but I wish to know the name of the lady to whom you are attached *par amours*." The poor boy was still more confused, and he could only reply, that he loved no one *par amours*. The Dame des Belles Cousines charged him with being a traitor to the laws of chivalry, and declared that his craven spirit was evinced by such an avowal. "Whence," she required, "sprang the valiancy and knightly feats of Launcelot, Gawain, Tristram, Giron the courteous, and other ornaments of the round table; of Ponthus, and of those knights and squires of this country whom I could enumerate: whence the grandeur of many whom I have known to arise to renown, except from the noble desire of maintaining themselves in the grace and esteem of the ladies; without which spirit-stirring sentiment they must have ever remained in the shades of obscurity? And do you, coward valet, presume to declare that you possess no sovereign lady, and desire to have none?"

Jean underwent a long scene of persecution on account of his confession of the want of proper chivalric sentiment, but he was at length restored to favour by the intercession of the ladies of the court. He then named as his mistress

dit Boucicaut, Maréchal de France, c. 5, 9, in the sixth volume of the large collection of French Memoirs.

* L'Histoire de Guerin de Montglaive.

Digitized by Google

Matheline de Coucy, a child only ten years old. "Matheline is indeed a pretty girl," replied the Dame des Belles Cousines, "but what profit, what honour, what comfort, what aid, what council for advancing you in chivalrous fame can you derive from such a choice? You should elect a lady of noble blood, who has the ability to advise, and the power to assist you; and you should serve her so truly, and love her so loyally, as to compel her to acknowledge the honourable affection which you entertain for her. For, be assured, that there is no lady, however cruel and haughty she may be, but through long service, will be induced to acknowledge and reward loyal affection with some portion of mercy. By such a course you will gain the praise of worthy knighthood, and till then I would not give an apple for you or your achievements: but he who loyally serves his lady will not only be blessed to the height of man's felicity in this life, but will never fall into those sins which will prevent his happiness hereafter. Pride will be entirely effaced from the heart of him who endeavours by humility and courtesy to win the grace of a lady. The true faith of a lover will defend him from the other deadly sins of anger, envy, sloth, and gluttony; and his devotion to his mistress renders the thought impossible of his conduct ever being stained with the vice of incontinence."*

The military exercises of the page were not many, and they were only important, inasmuch as they were the earliest ideas of his life, and that consequently the habits of his character were formed on them. He was taught to leap over trenches, to launch or cast spears and darts, to sustain the shield, and in his walk to imitate the measured tread of the soldier. He fought with light-staves against stakes raised for the nonce, as if they had been his mortal enemies, or met in encounters equally perilous his youthful companions of the castle.* During the seven years of these instructions he was called a valet, a damoiseau, or a page. The first title was of the most ancient usage, and was thoroughly chivalric; the second is nearly of equal authority,† but the word page was not much used till so late a period as the days of Philip de Comines.‡ Before that time it was most frequently applied to the children of the vulgar.

The next titles of the candidate for chivalry were armiger, scutifer or escuyer: but though these words denoted personal military attendance, yet his personal domestic service continued for some time. He prepared the refection in the morning, and then betook himself to his chivalric exercises. At dinner he, as well as the pages, furnished forth and attended at the table, and presented to his lord and the guests the water wherewith they washed their hands before and after the repast. The knight and the squire never sat before the same table, nor was even the relation of father and son allowed to destroy this principle of chivalric subordination. We learn from Paulus Warnefridus, the historian of the Lombards in Italy, that among that nation the son of a king did not dine with his father, unless he had been knighted by a foreign sovereign.§ Such, too, was the practice among nations whose chivalry wore a brighter polish than it shone with among the Italian Lombards. In Arragon, no son of a knight sat at the table of a knight till he had been admitted into the order.‖ The young English squire in the time of Edward III. carved before his father at the table; and again in the Merchant's Tale, it is said, —

"All but a squire that hight Damian,
That carft before the knight many a day."

And about the same time the sewers

* L'Historie et plaisante Cronicque du petit Jehan de Saintré, vol. 1, c. 3—6. I have the authority of Sir Walter Scott and other able writers on chivalry, to cite this romance as good evidence for the laws and manners of knighthood. It was written in 1459; the first edition was printed in Gothic characters in 1523, and it was reprinted in three volumes, 12mo. in 1724.

* Caxton, Fayt of Armes and Chevalrye, c. 9.

† *Damoisel* et Escuyer, sont arrivés à Novandel demandant chivalarie, lequel layant reçu n'est plus appellé de tels tiltres, ains seulement des tiltre de chevalier.—Amadis de Gaul, liv. 3, c. 3.

‡ Fauchet de l'Origine des Chevaliers, liv. 1, ch. 1. Monstrelet, vol. 1, c. 138. L'Histoire de Bertrand du Guesclin, c. 1.

§ Paulus Warnefridus, lib. 1, c. 23.

‖ Eiminus Petri Salonava Justitia Arragonum. Lib. de privilegiis baronum et riccorum hominum.

Digitized by Google

and cup-bearers of the Earl of Foix were his sons.* The squire cup-bearer was often as fine and spirited a character as his knight. Once, when Edward the Black prince was sojourning in Bordeaux, he entertained in his chamber many of his English lords. A squire brought wine into the room, and the prince, after he had drank, sent the cup to Sir John Chandos, selecting him as the first in honour, because he was constable of Aquitain. The knight drank, and by his command the squire bore the cup to the Earl of Oxenford, a vain, weak man, who, unworthy of greatness, was ever seeking for those poor trifles which noble knights overlooked and scorned. Feeling his dignity offended that he had not been treated according to his rank, he refused the cup, and with mocking gesture desired the squire to carry it to his master, Sir John Chandos. "Why so?" replied the youth, "he hath drank already, therefore drink you, since he hath offered it to you. If you will not drink, by St. George, I will cast the wine in your face." The Earl, judging from the stern and dogged manner of the squire, that this was no idle threat, quietly set the cup to his mouth.†

After dinner the squires prepared the chess tables or arranged the hall for minstrelsy and dancing. They participated in all these amusements; and herein the difference between the squire and the mere domestic servant was shown. In strictness of propriety the squire's dress ought to have been brown, or any of those dark colours which our ancestors used to call '*sad*.' But the gay spirit of youth was loth to observe this rule.

> "Embroidered was he, as it were a mede,
> Alle full of freshe floures, white and rede."

His dress was never of the fine texture, nor so highly ornamented as that of the knight. The squires often made the beds of their lords, and the service of the day was concluded by their presenting them with the vin du coucher.

> "Les lis firent le Escuier,
> Si coucha chacun son seignor."

Personal service was considered so much the duty of a squire that his title was always applied to some particular part of it. The squires of a lord had each his respective duties — one was the squire of the chamber, or the chamberlain; and another the carving squire. Every branch of the domestic arrangements of the castle was under the charge of an aspirant to chivalry. Spenser, who has opened to us so many interesting views of chivalric manners, has admirably painted the domestic squire discharging some of his duties: —

> "There fairly them receives a gentle squire,
> Of mild demeanor and rare courtesy,
> Right cleanly clad in comely sad attire;
> In word and deed that show'd great modesty,

* Froissart, vol. 2, c. 31.

† Froissart, vol. 2, c. 92. The Earl of Oxenford had reason to repent of his arrogance. Sir John Chandos, observes Froissart, marked well all the matter between his squire and the earl, and remained quiet till the prince was gone from them, and then coming to the earl, he said, "Sir Thomas, are you displeased that I drank before you, I am constable of this country; I may well drink before you, since my lord the prince, and other lords here, are content therewith. It is of truth that you were at the battle of Poictiers; but all who were there do not know so well as I what you did. I shall declare it. When my lord the prince had made his voyage in Languedock and Carcassone to Narbonne, and was returned hither to his town of Bordeaux, you chose to go to England. What the king said to you on your arrival I know right well, though I was not present. He demanded of you whether you had finished your voyage, and what you had done with his son the prince. You answered, that you had left him in good health at Bordeaux. Then the king said, 'How durst you be so bold as to return without him? I commanded you and all others when ye departed, that you should not return without him, and you thus presume to come again to England. I straightly command you, that within four days you avoid my realm and return again to him, and if I find you within this my realm on the fifth day, you shall lose your life, and all your heritage forever.' And you feared the king's words, as it was reason, and left the realm, and so your fortune was good, for truly you were with my lord the prince four days before the battle of Poictiers. On the day of the battle you had forty spears under your charge, and I had fourscore. Now you may see whether I ought to drink before you or not, since I am constable of Aquitain." The Earl of Oxenford was ashamed, and would gladly have been thence at the time; but he was obliged to remain and hear this reproof from that right noble knight, Sir John Chandos.

Digitized by Google

And knew his good to all of each degree,
Hight reverence. He them with speeches meet,
Does faire entreat, no courting nicety,
But simple, true, and eke unfained sweet,
As might become a squire so great persons to greet."*

The most honourable squire was he that was attached to the person of his lord; he was called the squire of the body, and was in truth for the time the only military youth of the class: every squire, however, became in turn by seniority the martial squire. He accompanied his lord into the field of battle, carrying his shield and armour, while the page usually bore the hemlet.† He held the stirrup, and assisted the knight to arm. There was always a line of squires in the rear of a line of knights; the young cavaliers supplying their lords with weapons, assisting them to rise when overthrown, and receiving their prisoners.‡

The banner of the banneret and baron was displayed by the squire. The pennon of the knight was also waved by him when his leader was only a knight, and conducted so many men-at-arms, and other vassals, that, to give dignity and importance to his command, he removed his pennon from his own lance to that of his attendant. We can readily believe the historians of ancient days, that it was right pleasant to witness the seemly pride and generous emulation with which the squires of the baron, the banneret, and the knight displayed the various ensigns of their master's chivalry.

But whatever were the class of duties to which the candidate for chivalry was attached, he never forgot that he was also the squire of dames. During his course of a valet he had been taught to play with love, and as years advanced, nature became his tutor. Since the knights were bound by oath to defend the feebler sex, so the principle was felt in all its force and spirit by him who aspired to chivalric honours. Hence proceeded the qualities of kindness, gentleness, and courtesy. The minstrels in the castles harped of love as well as of war, and from them (for all young men had not, like Sir Ipomydon, clerks for their tutors) the squire learned to express his passion in verse. This was an important feature of chivalric education, for among the courtesies of love, the present of books from knights to ladies was not forgotten, and it more often happened than monkish austerity approved of, that a volume, bound in sacred guise, contained, not a series of hymns to the Virgin Mary, but a variety of amatory effusions to a terrestrial mistress.* Love was mixed in the mind of the young squire with images of war, and he, therefore, thought that his mistress, like honour, could only be gained through difficulties and dangers; and from this feeling proceeded the romance of his passion. But while no obstacle, except the maiden's disinclination, was in his way, he sang, he danced, he played on musical instruments, and practised all the arts common to all ages and nations to win the fair. In Chaucer, we have a delightful picture of the manners of the squire: —

"Singing he was or floyting all the day,
He was as fresh as is the month of May.†
He could songs make, and well endite,
Just and eke dance, and well pourtraie and write;
So hote he loved, that by nighterdale (night time)
He slept no more than doth the nightingale."

Military exercises were mingled with the anxieties of love. He practised every mode by which strength and activity could be given to the body. He learned to endure hunger and thirst; to disregard the seasons' changes, and like the Roman

* Fair Queen, book 1, canto 10, st. 7.
† Froissart, 1, c. 269. M. Paris, 873.
‡ "Les prisons firent arreter,
Et en lieu seur tourner,
A leurs escuyers les liverent
Et à garder les commandement."

* Ulrich von Lichtenstein, p. 70. Ulrich was a German knight, who lived in the fourteenth century, and wrote his own memoirs. They often give us curious glimpses into ancient chivalry.

† Chaucer, in drawing his squire, had certainly in mind a passage from his favourite poem, "The Romaunt of the Rose:" —
"Si avoient bien a Bachalier,
Que il sache de vieler,
De fleuter et de danser."
I do not notice this circumstance on account of the literary coincidence, but to show that the squire of France and the squire of England were in Chaucer's view the same character.

Digitized by Google

youths in the Campus Martius when covered with dust, he plunged into the stream that watered the domains of his lord. He accustomed himself to wield the sword, to thrust the lance, to strike with the axe, and to wear armour. The most favourite exercise was that which was called the Quintain: for it was particularly calculated to practise the eye and hand in giving a right direction to the lance. A half figure of a man, armed with sword and buckler, was placed on a post, and turned on a pivot, so that if the assailant with his lance hit him not on the middle of the breast but on the extremities, he made the figure turn round, and strike him an ill-aimed blow, much to the merriment of the spectators. The game of the Quintain was sometimes played by hanging a shield upon a staff fixed in the ground, and the skilful squire riding apace struck the shield in such a manner as to detach it from its ligatures.*

But of all the exercises of chivalry, none was thought so important as horsemanship.

"Wel could he sit on horse and fair ride:"

— is Chaucer's praise of his young squire. Horsemanship was considered the peculiar science of men of gentle blood. That Braggadochio had not been trained in chivalry was apparent from his bad riding. Even his valiant courser chafed and foamed, for he disdained to bear any base burthen.†

Notions of religion were blended with those of arms in the mind of the squire, for his sword was blessed by the priest, and delivered to him at the altar. As he advanced to manhood he left to younger squires most of the domestic duties of his station. Without losing his title of squire he became also called a bachelor, a word also used to designate a young unmarried knight. He went on military expeditions. The squire in Chaucer, though but twenty years old, had

"Sometime been in chevauchec,
In Flanders, in Artois, and in Picardy."

Love was the inspirer of his chivalry: for he

"Bore him well, as of so little space,
In hope to stonden in his lady's grace."*

For the squire, instead of being merely the servant of the knight, often periled himself in his defence. When the knight was impetuous beyond the well-tempered bravery of chivalry, the admirer of his might followed him so close, and adventured himself so jeopardously, as to cover him with his shield.† A valiant knight, Ernalton of Saint Colombe, was on the point of being discomfited by a squire called Guillonet, of Salynges; but when the squire of Sir Ernalton saw his master almost at utterance, he went to him, and took his axe out of his hands, and said, "Ernalton, go your way, and rest you; ye can no longer fight;" and then with the axe he went to the hostile squire, says Froissart, and gave him such a stroke on the head that he was astonished, and had nigh fallen to the earth. He recovered himself, and aimed a blow at his antagonist, which would have been fatal, but that the squire slipped under it, and, throwing his arms round Guillonet,

* Du Cange, Dissert. 7, au Joinville, and Menage, Dict. Et. in verb.

† Fairy Queen, book 2, canto 3, st. 46.

"So to his steed he got, and 'gan to ride,
As one unfit therefore, that all might see
He had not trained been in chivalry;
Which well that valiant courser did discern;
For he despised to tread in dew degree,
But chaf'd and foam'd with courage fierce and stern,
And to be eas'd of that base burthen still did erne."

In the old poem called the Siege of Karvalerock, a knight is praised for not appearing on horseback like a man asleep.

"Ki kant seroit sur le cheval,
Ne sembloit home ki someille."

* Chaucer, Prologue to the Canterbury tales. Selden, Titles of Honour, part 2, c. 3, 6.

† Froissart, vol. 1, c. 321. 'The lord Langurant did that day marvels in arms, so that his own men and also strangers had marvels of his deeds. He advanced himself so much forward that he put his life in great jeopardy, for they within the town (against whose walls he was standing on a ladder), by clean force raised his helm from his head, and so had been dead without remedy, if a squire of his had not been there, who followed him so near that he covered him with his target, and the lord and he together descended down the ladder by little and little, and in their descending they received on their target many a great stroke. They were greatly praised by all that saw them.'—Berner's Froissart.

Digitized by Google

wrestled, and finally threw him. The victor exclaimed that he would slay his prostrate foe, unless he would yield himself to his master. The name of his master was asked: "Ernalton of Saint Colombe," returned the squire, "with whom thou hast fought all this season." Guillonet seeing the dagger raised to strike him, yielded him to render his body prisoner at Lourde within fifteen days after, rescue or no rescue.* The squires were brought into the *mêleé* of knights, at the famous battle of Bovines, on the 27th of July, 1214. The force of Philip Augustus was far inferior in number to that of the united Germans and Flemish; and, in order to prevent them from surrounding him, he lengthened his line by placing the squires at the two extremities of the knights. The mail-clad chivalry of the emperor Otho were indignant at such soldiers daring to front them; but the young warriors were not dismayed by haughty looks and contumelious speeches, and their active daring mainly contributed to the gaining of the victory, the most considerable one that France had ever obtained.†

Seldom before the age of twenty-one was a squire admitted to the full dignity of chivalry. Chaucer's squire was twenty, and had achieved feats of arms. St. Louis particularly commanded that the honour of knighthood should not be conferred upon any man under the age of twenty-one. As the time approached for the completing and crowning of his character, his religious duties became more strictly enforced. Knighthood was assimilated, as much as possible, to the clerical state, and prayer, confession, and fasting were necessary for the candidate for both. The squire had his sponsors, the emblems of spiritual regeneration were applied to him, and the ceremonies of inauguration commenced by considering him a new man. He went into a bath, and then was placed in a bed. They were symbolical, the bath of purity of soul, and the bed of the rest which he was hereafter to enjoy in paradise. In the middle ages people generally reposed naked,* and it was not till after he had slept that the neophyte was clad with a shirt. This white dress was considered symbolical of the purity of his new character. A red garment was thrown over him to mark his resolution to shed his blood in the cause of Heaven. The vigil of arms was a necessary preliminary to knighthood. The night before his inauguration he passed in a church, armed from head to foot,† and engaged in prayer and religious meditation. One of the last acts of preparation was the shaving of his head to make its appearance resemble that of the ecclesiastical tonsure. To part with hair was always regarded in the church as a symbol of servitude to God.‡

The ceremony of inauguration was generally performed in a church, or a hall of a castle, on the occasion of some great religious or civic festival. The candidate advanced to the altar, and, taking his sword from the scarf to which it was appended, he presented it to the priest, who laid it upon the altar, praying that Heaven would blest it, and that it might serve for a protection of the church, of widows, and orphans, and of all the servants of God, against the tyrannies of pagans and other deceivers, in whose eyes he mercifully hoped that it would appear as an instrument of terror. The young soldier took his oaths of chivalry; he solemnly swore to defend the church, to attack the wicked, to respect the priesthood, to

* Froissart, liv. 2, c. 24.

† Rigordus in Du Chesne, vol. 5, p. 59. Mr. Maturin, in that powerful and magnificent romance, the Albigenses, has made a very fine use of the instance related above of the squirehood of Philip Augustus.

* This strange practice prevailed, says Mr. Ellis, (Specimens of Early English Poetry, vol. i., p. 325,) at a time when the day-dress of both sexes was much warmer than at present, it being generally bordered, and often lined with furs; insomuch that numberless warrens were established in the neighbourhood of London for the purpose of supplying its inhabitants with rabbit skins. "Perhaps," continues Mr. Ellis, in his usual style of pleasantry, "it was this warmth of clothing that enabled our ancestors, in defiance of a northern climate, to serenade their mistresses with as much perseverance as if they had lived under the torrid zone."

† This circumstance was satirised, as the reader must remember, by Cervantes, who did not always spare chivalry itself in his good humoured satire of the romances of chivalry.

‡ Du Cange, articles Barbani radere, and Capilli. The complete shaving of the head was not often submitted to by knights. It was generally thought sufficient if a lock of hair was cut off.

Digitized by Google

protect women and the poor, to preserve the country in tranquillity, and to shed his blood, even to the last drop, in behalf of his brethren. The priest then re-delivered the sword to him with the assurance that, as it had received God's blessing, he who wielded it would prevail against all enemies and the adversaries of the church. He then exhorted him to gird his sword upon his strong thigh, that with it he might exercise the power of equity to destroy the hopes of the profane, to fight for God's church, and defend his faithful people, and to repel and destroy the hosts of the wicked, whether they were heretics or pagans. Finally, the soldier in chivalry was exhorted to defend widows and orphans, and to restore and preserve the desolate, to revenge the wronged, to confirm the virtuous; and he was assured that by performing these high duties he would attain heavenly joys.*

The young warrior afterwards advanced to the supreme lord in the assembly, and kneeled before him with clasped hands; an attitude copied from feudal manners, and the only circumstance of feudality in the whole ceremony. The lord then questioned him whether his vows had any objects distinct from the wish to maintain religion and chivalry. The soldier having answered in the negative, the ceremony was permitted to advance. He was invested with all the exterior marks of chivalry. The knights and ladies of the court attended on him, and delivered to him the various pieces of his harness.* The armour varied with the military customs of different periods and of different countries, but some matters were of permanent usage. The spurs were always put on first, and the sword was belted on last. The concluding sign of being dubbed or adopted into the order of knighthood was a slight blow† given by the lord to the cavalier, and called the accolade, from the part of the body, the neck, whereon it was struck. The lord then proclaimed him a knight in the name of God and the Saints, and such cavaliers as were present embraced their newly-made brother, the priest exhorted him to go forth like a man, and observe the ordinances of heaven. Impressed with the solemnity of the scene, all the

* In the Fabliau of the order of knighthood the exhortation is somewhat different, and necessarily so, for the candidate was a Saracen. It was not to be expected that he would vow to destroy his erring brethren. The exhortation deserves to be extracted, for it contains some particulars not noticed in the one which I have inserted in the text. Whether specially mentioned or not, attendance at church and serving the ladies were always regarded as essentials of a knight's duty."

"Still to the truth direct thy strong desire,
And flee the very air where dwells a liar:
Fail not the mass, there still with reverend feet
Each morn be found, nor scant by offering meet:
Each week's sixth day with fast subdue thy mind,
For 'twas the day of PASSION for mankind:
Else let some pious work, some deed of grace,
With substituted worth fulfil the place:
Haste thee, in fine, where dames complain of wrong,
Maintain their right, and in their cause be strong.
For not a wight there lives, if right I deem,
Who holds fair hope of well-deserv'd esteem,
But to the dames by strong devotion bound,
Their cause sustains, nor faints for toil or wound."

WAY'S *Fabliaux*, vol. i., p. 24.

The expressive conciseness of the exhortation to the duties of knighthood in the romance of Ysaie le Triste is admirable. "Chevalier soies cruel a tes ennemys, debonnaire a tes amys, humble a non puissans, et aidez toujours le droit a soustenir, et confons celluy qui tort a vefves dames, poures pucellus et orphelins, et poures gens aymes toujours a ton pouvir, et avec ce aime toujours Saincte Eglise."

* The more distinguished the rank of the aspirant, the more distinguished were those who put themselves forward to arm him. The romances often state that the shield was given to a knight by the king of Spain, the sword by a king of England, the helmet from a French sovereign, &c.

† The word dub is of pure Saxon origin. The French word adouber is similar to the Latin adoptare, not adaptare, for knights were not made by adapting the habiliments of chivalry to them, but by receiving them, or being adopted into the order. Many writers have imagined that the accolade was the last blow which the soldier might receive with impunity; but this interpretation is not correct, for the squire was as jealous of his honour as the knight. The origin of the accolade it is impossible to trace, but it was clearly considered symbolical of the religious and moral duties of knighthood, and was the only ceremony used when knights were made in places (the field of battle, for instance), where time and circumstances did not allow of many ceremonies.

Digitized by Google

other knights renewed in a few brief and energetic sentences their vows of chivalry; and while the hall was gleaning with drawn swords, the man of God again took up the word, blessing him who had newly undertaken, and those who had been long engaged in holy warfare, and praying that all the hosts of the enemies of heaven might be destroyed by Christian chivalry. The assembly then dispersed. The new knight, on leaving the hall, vaulted on his steed, and showed his skill in the management of the lance, that the admiring people might know that a cavalier had been elected for their protection. He distributed largesses among the servants and minstrels of the castle, for whoso received so great a gift as the order of chivalry honoured not his order if he gave not after his ability. The remainder of the day passed in congratulation and festivity.*

Many of the most virtuous affections of the heart wound themselves round that important circumstance in a man's life, his admission into knighthood. He always regarded with filial piety the cavalier who invested him with the order. He never would take him prisoner if they were ranged on opposite sides, and he would have forfeited all title to chivalric honours if he had couched his lance against him.

A noble aspirant to chivalry would only receive the accolade from a warrior, whose fame had excited his emulation, or sometimes the feelings of feudal attachment prevailed over the higher and sterner sense of chivalry. In expectation of a battle, the Earl of Buckingham called forth a gentle squire of Savoy, and said, "Sir, if God be pleased, I think we shall this day have a battle; therefore I wish that you would become a knight." The squire excused himself by saying, "Sir, God thank you for the nobleness that ye would put me unto; but, Sir, I will never be a knight without I am made by the hands of my natural lord, the Earl of Savoy."†

A very singular tribute was paid to bravery during the famous battle of Homildon Hill. When the cloth-yard arrows of the English yeomen were piercing the opposite line through and through, Sir John Swinton exhorted the Scotsmen not to stand like deer to be shot at, but to indulge their ancient courage and meet their enemy hand to hand. His wish, however, was echoed only by one man, Adam Gordon, and between their families a mortal feud existed. Generously forgetting the hatred which each house bore to the other, Gordon kneeled before Swinton, and solicited to be knighted by so brave a man. The accolade was given, and the two friends, like companions in arms, gallantly charged the English. If a kindred spirit had animated the whole of the Scottish line, the fate of the day might have been reversed; but the two noble knights were only supported by about a hundred men-at-arms devoted to all their enterprises; and they all perished.*

The ceremonies of inauguration which have been described were gone through when knighthood was conferred on great and public occasions of festivity, but they often gave place to the power of rank and circumstances. Princes were exempted from the laborious offices of page and squire. Men were often adopted into chivalry on the eve of a battle, as it was considered that a sense of their new honours would inspire their gallantry. Once during the war of our Black Prince in Spain, more than three hundred soldiers raised their pennons; many of them had been squires, but in one case the distinction was entirely complimentary, for Peter the Cruel, who could boast neither chivalric qualities nor chivalric services, was dubbed. There was scarcely a battle in the middle ages which was not preceded or followed by a large promotion of men to the honour of knighthood. Sometimes, indeed, they were regularly educated squires,

* Caxton, Fayt of Armes and Chivalry, c. 49. Favyn Theatre of Honour, liv. i., c. 6. Daniel, Hist. de la Milice Francaise, liv. i., c. 4.

† Froissart, vol. i., c. 364. The romance writers made strange work of this disposition of candidates for chivalry to receive the wished for honours from the hands of redoubted heroes. In one of them a man wanted to be knighted by the famous Sir Lancelot of the Lake. He however happened to be dead, but that circumstance was of no consequence, for a sword was placed in the right hand of the skeleton, and made to drop upon the neck of the kneeling squire, who immediately rose a knight.

* Pinkerton's History of Scotland, vol. i. p. 71.

Digitized by Google

but more frequently the mere contingency of the moment was regarded, and soldiers distinguished only for their bravery and ungraced by the gentle virtues of chivalry were knighted. We often read of certain squires being made cavaliers and raising their pennons, but very often no pennons were raised, that is to say, the men who were knighted were not able to summon round their lances a single man-at-arms; hence it occurred that the world was overspread with poor knights, some of whom brought chivalry into disgrace by depredations and violence; others wandered about the world in quest of adventures, and let out their swords to their richer brethren. In the romance of Partenopex of Blois, there is a picture of a knight of this last class.

"So riding, they o'ertake an errant knight,
Well hors'd and large of limb, Sir Gaudwin hight,
He nor of castle nor of land was lord,
Houseless he reap'd the harvest of the sword;
And now, not more on fame than profit bent,
Rode with blithe heart unto the tournament;
For cowardice he held it deadly sin,
And sure his mind and bearing were akin,
The face an index to the soul within;
It seem'd that he, such pomp his train bewray'd,
Had shap'd a goodly fortune by his blade;
His knaves were point device, in livery dight,
With sumpter nags, and tents for shelter in the night."

Cavaliers sometimes took their title from the place where they were knighted: a very distinguished honour was to be called a Knight of the Mines, which was to be obtained by achieving feats of arms in the subterraneous process of a siege. The mines were the scenes of knightly valour; they were lighted up by torches; trumpets and other war instruments resounded, and the general affair of the siege was suspended, while the knights tried their prowess; the singularity of the mode of combat giving a zest to the encounters. No prisoners could be taken, as a board, breast high, placed in the passage by mutual consent, divided the warriors. Swords or short battle-axes were the only weapons used.

In the year 1388, the castle of Vertueill, in Poictou, then held by the English, was besieged by the Duke of Bourbon. Its walls raised on a lofty rock were not within the play of the battering ram, and therefore the tedious operation of the mine was resorted to: both parties frequently met and fought in the excavated chambers, and a battle of swords was one day carried on between Regnaud de Montferrand, the squire of the castle, and the Duke of Bourbon, each being ignorant of the name and quality of the other. At length the cry "Bourbon, Bourbon? Our Lady!" shouted by the attendants of the Duke, in their eager joy at the fray, struck the ears of the squire, and arrested his hand. He withdrew some paces, and inquired whether the duke was present: when they assured him of the fact, he requested to receive the honour of knighthood in the mine, from the hands of the duke, and offering to deliver up the castle to him in return for the distinction, and from respect for the honour and valour he found in him. Never was a castle in the pride of its strength and power gained by easier means. The keys were delivered to the Duke of Bourbon by Regnaud de Montferrand, and the honour of knighthood, with a goodly courser and a large golden girdle, were bestowed on the squire in return.*

Such were the various ceremonies of chivalric inauguration. Those of degradation should be noticed. What the offences were which were punishable by degradation it is impossible to specify. If a knight offended against the rules of the order of chivalry he was degraded, inasmuch as he was despised by his brother knights; and as honour was the life-blood of chivalry, he dreaded contempt more than the sword. Still, however, there were occasions when a knight might be formally deprived of his distinctions. The ceremony of degradation generally took place after sentence, and previous to the execution of a legal judgment against him.† Sometimes his sword was broken over his

* Favyn, liv. iii., c. 12. Monstrelet, vol. vi., p. 82. Honoré, Dissertations Historiques et Critiques sur la Chevaliere. 4to. Paris, 1718, p. 55.

† Selden likens the degradation of a knight to the degradation of a clergyman by the canon law, previously to his being delivered over to the secular magistrate for punishment. The order of the clergy and the order of knighthood were supposed to be saved from disgrace by this ex-

Digitized by Google

head, and his spurs were chopped off; and, to make the bitterness of insult a part of the punishment, these actions were performed by a person of low condition; but at other times the forms of degradation were very elaborate. The knight who was to be degraded was in the first instance armed by his brother knights from head to foot, as if he had been going to the battle-field; they then conducted him to a high stage, raised in a church, where the king and his court, the clergy, and the people, were assembled; thirty priests sung such psalms as were used at burials; at the end of every psalm they took from him a piece of armour. First, they removed his helmet, the defence of disloyal eyes, then his cuirass on the right side, as the protector of a corrupt heart; then his cuirass on the left side, as from a member consenting, and thus with the rest; and when any piece of armour was cast upon the ground, the king of arms and heralds cried, "Behold the harness of a disloyal and miscreant knight!" A basin of gold or silver full of warm water was then brought upon the stage, and a herald holding it up, demanded the knight's name. The pursuivants answered that which in truth was his designation. Then the chief king of arms said, "That is not true, for he is a miscreant and false traitor, and hath transgressed the ordinances of knighthood." The chaplains anwered, "Let us give him his right name." The trumpets sounded a few notes, supposed to express the demand, "what shall be done with him?" The king, or his chief officer, who was present replied, "Let him with dishonour and shame be banished from my kingdom as a vile and infamous man, that hath offended against the honour of knighthood.' The heralds immediately cast the warm water upon the face of the disgraced knight, as though he were newly baptized, saying, "Henceforth thou shalt be called by thy right name, Traitor." Then the king, with twelve other knights, put upon them mourning garments, declaring sorrow, and thrust the degraded knight from the stage: by the buffetings of the people he was driven to the altar, where he was put into a coffin, and the burial-service of the church was solemnly read over him.*

The English customs regarding degradation are minutely stated by Stowe in the case of an English knight, Sir Andrew Harcloy, Earl of Carlisle, who (in the time of Edward II.) was deprived of his knighthood, previously to his suffering the penalties of the law for a treasonable correspondence with Robert Bruce. "He was led to the bar as an earl, worthily apparelled, with his sword girt about him, horsed, booted, and spurred, and unto him Sir Anthony Lucy, (his judge) spoke in this manner: 'Sir Andrew,' quoth he, 'the king for thy valiant service hath done thee great honour, and made thee Earl of Carlisle, since which time thou as a traitor to thy lord, the king, led his people, that should have helped him at the battle of Heighland, away by the county of Copland, and through the earldom of Lancaster, by which means our lord the king was discomfited there of the Scots, through thy treason and falseness; whereas, if thou haddest come betimes, he hadde had the victory, and this treason thou committed for the great sum of gold and silver that thou received of James Douglas, a Scot, the king's enemy. Our lord the king wills, therefore, that the order of knighthood, by the which thou received all the honour and worship upon thy body, be brought to nought, and thy state undone, that other knights of lower degree may after thee beware and take example truly to serve.' Then commanded he to hew his spurs from his heels, then to break his sword over his head, which the king had given him to keep and defend his land therewith, when he made him earl. After this, he let unclothe him of his furred tabard, and of his hood, of his coat of arms, and also of his girdle; and when this was done, Sir Anthony said unto him, 'Andrew,' quoth he, 'now art thou no knight, but a knave; and for thy treason the king wills that thou shalt be hanged and drawn, and thy head smitten off from thy body, and burned before thee, and thy body quartered, and thy head being smitten off, afterwards to be set upon London bridge, and thy four quarters shall be sent into four good towns of England, that all others may beware by

pulsion of an unworthy member. Selden, Titles of Honour, p. 787.

* Segar, Of Honour, lib. ii., c. 5.

Digitized by Google

thee;' and as Sir Anthony Lucy had said, so was it done in all things on the last day of October."*

CHAPTER III.

THE EQUIPMENT.

Beauty of the chivalric Equipment.—The Lance.—The Pennon.—The Axe, Maule, and Martel.—The Sword.—Fondness of the Knight for it.—Swords in romances.—The Shield.—Various sorts of Mail.—Mail.—Mail and Plate.—Plate Harness.—The Scarf.—Surcoats.—Armorial Bearings.—Surcoats of the Military Orders.—The Dagger of Mercy.—Story of its Use.—Value of Inquiries into ancient Armour.—A precise Knowledge unattainable.—Its general Features interesting.—The broad Lines of the Subject.—Excellence of Italian Armour.—Armour of the Squire, &c.—Allegories made on Armour.—The Horse of the Knight.

THE fierce equipage of war deserves a fuller consideration than was given to it in the last chapter. The horse whereon the knight dashed to the perilous encounter should be described, the weapons by which he established the honour of his fame and the nobleness of his mistress' beauty deserve something more than a general notice. Never was military costume more splendid and graceful than in the days which are emphatically called "The days of the shield and the lance." What can modern warfare present in comparison with the bright and glittering scene of a goodly company of gentle knights pricking on the plain with nodding plumes, emblazoned shields, silken pennons streaming in the wind, and the scarf, that beautiful token of lady-love, crossing the strong and polished steel cuirass.

The lance was the chief offensive weapon of the knight: its staff was commonly formed from the ash-tree.

Its length was fitted to the vigour and address of him who bore it, and its iron and sharpened head was fashiond agreeably to his taste. To the top of the wooden part of the lance was generally fixed an ensign, or piece of silk, linen, or stuff. On this ensign was marked the cross, if the expedition of the soldier had for its object the Holy Land, or it bore some part of his heraldry; and in the latter case, when the lance was fixed in the ground near the entrance of the owner's tent, it served to designate the bearer. Originally this ensign was called a gonfanon, the combination of two Teutonic words, signifying war and a standard. Subsequently, when the ensign was formed of rich stuffs and silks, it was called a pennon, from the Latin word pannus.* The pennon cannot be described from its exact breadth, for that quality of it varied with the different fancies of knights, and it had sometimes one, but more often two indentations at the end.

When the pennon was cut square on occasion of a simple knight becoming a knight banneret it received the title of a banner, the ancient German word for the standard of a leader or prince.†

To transfix his foe with a lance was the ordinary endeavour of a knight; but some cavaliers of peculiar hardihood preferred to come to the closest quarters, where the lance could not be used. The battle-axe, which they therefore often wielded, needs no particular description. But the most favourite weapons were certain ponderous steel or iron hammers, carrying death either by the weight of their fall or the sharpness of the edge. They were called the martel and the maule, words applied indifferently in old times; for writers of days of chivalry cared little about extreme accuracy of

* Stow's Chronicle.

† The iron of Poictou was particularly famous for making admirable lance-heads; nor was it disliked as a shield. Thus an old French poet says, —

"Et fu armé so le cheval de pris,
D'Aubere, ét d'iaume d'escu Poitevin."
Du Cange, art. Ferrum Pictavense.

The iron of Bourdeaux is frequently mentioned by Froissart as of excellent use in armour. Liv. 2, c. 117, 4, 6. And the old chronicle of Bertrand du Guesclin says, —

"Un escuier y vint qui au comte lanca
D'une espée de Bourdeaux, qui moult chier li cousta."

* Menage, Diction. Etym. in verb.

† It is not worth while to say much about mere words. I shall only add that the banner was sometimes called the Gonfanon.

"Li Barons aurent gonfanons,
Li chevaliers aurent penons."

Digitized by Google

diction, not foreseeing the fierce disputes which their want of minuteness in description would give rise to. This was the weapon which ecclesiastics used when they buckled harness over rochet and hood, and holy ardour impelled them into the field; for the canons of the church forbad them from wielding swords, and they always obeyed the letter of the law. Some cavaliers, in addition to their other weapons, carried the mallet, or maule, hanging it at their saddle bow, till the happy moment for 'breaking open skulls' arrived. When it was used alone, this description of offensive armour was rather Gothic than chivalric; yet the rudeness of earlier ages had its admirers in all times of chivalry, the affected love of simplicity not being peculiar to the present day. A lance could not execute half the sanguinary purposes of Richard Cœur de Lion, and it was with a battle-axe,* as often as with a sword, that he dashed into the ranks of the Saracens. Bertrand du Guesclin had a partiality for a martel, and as late as the year 1481 the battle-axe was used.

Among the hosts of the Duke of Burgundy was a knight named Sir John Vilain. He was a nobleman from Flanders, very tall, and of great bodily strength: he was mounted on a good horse, and held a battle-axe in both hands. He pressed his way into the thickest part of the battle, and, throwing his bridle on the neck of his steed, he gave such mighty blows on all sides with his battle-axe that whoever was struck was instantly unhorsed, and wounded past recovery.* Generally speaking, however, the polite and courteous knights of chivalry thought it an ungentle practice to use a weapon which was associated with ideas of trade; and the romance-writers, who reflect the style of thinking of their times, commonly give the lance to the knight, and the axe or mallet to some rude and ferocious giant.†

The usual weapon for the press and mêlée was the sword, and there were a great many interesting associations attached to it. The knight threw round it all his affections. In that weapon he particularly trusted. It was his *good* sword, and with still more confidence and kindness he called it his *own good* sword. He gave it a name, and engraved on it some moral sentence, or a word referring to a great event of his life. Not indeed that these sentences were confined to the sword; they were sometimes engraven on the frontier of the hemlet, or even on the spurs,‡ but the hilt or blade of the sword were their usual and proper places. The sword rather than the lance was the weapon which represented the chivalry of a family, and descended as the heir-loom of its knighthood. When no one inherited his name, there was as much generous contention among his friends to possess his good sword, as in the days of Greece poetry has ascribed to the warriors who wished for the armour of Achilles.§ The sword was the weapon which connected the religious and military parts of the chivalric character. The knight swore by his sword, for its cross hilt was emblematical of his Saviour's cross.

> David in his daies dubbed knights,
> And did him *swere on her sword* to serve truth ever.
>
> P. Ploughman.

The word Jesus was sometimes engraven on the hilt to remind the wearer of his religious duties. The sword was his only crucifix, when mass was said in the awful pause between the forming of the military array and the laying of lances

* This battle-axe is very amusingly described in the metrical romance of Richard Cœur de Lion: —

> "King Richard I understand,
> Or he went out of England,
> Let him make an axe for the nones,
> To break therewith the Sarasyns bones.
> The head was wrought right wele,
> Therein was twenty pounds of steel,
> And when he came into Cyprus land,
> The ax he took in his hand.
> All that he hit he all to-frapped,
> The Griffons away fast rapped
> Natheless many he cleaved,
> And their unthanks thereby lived,
> And the prison when he came to,
> With his ax he smot right thro,
> Dores, barres, and iron chains,
> And delivered his men out of pains."
>
> Line 2197, &c.

* Monstrelet. Johnes' edit., vol. 5, p. 294.

† Thus Pandora the giant in Palmerin of England carried a huge mallet: — but I need not multiply instances.

‡ En loyal amour tout mon cœur, was a favourite motto on the shank of a spur.

§ Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. 1, p. 193.

Digitized by Google

in their rests. It was moreover his consolation in the moment of death. When that doughty knight of Spain, Don Rodrigo Frojaz was lying upon his shield, with his helmet for a pillow, he kissed the cross of his sword in remembrance of that on which the incarnate son of God had died for him, and in that act of devotion rendered up his soul into the hands of his Creator.*

The handle of the sword was also remarkable for another matter. The knight, in order not to lose the advantage of having his seal by him, caused it to be cut in the head of his sword, and thus by impressing his seal upon any wax attached to a legal document, he exhibited his determination to maintain his obligation by the threefold figure of his seal, the upholden naked sword, and the cross.†

The sword of the knight was held in such high estimation, that the name of its maker was thought worthy of record. Thus when Geoffrey of Plantagenet received the honour of knighthood, a sword was brought out of the royal treasury, the work of Galan, the best of all sword smiths.‡ Spain was always famous for the temper and brilliancy of its swords. Martial speaks in several places of the Spanish swords which, when hot from the forge, were plunged into the river Salo near Bilbilis in Celtiberia. The armourers at Saragossa were as renowned in days of chivalry as those of Toledo in rather later times, for it was not only the sword of Toledo that became a proverbial phrase for the perfection of the art. Sometimes the armourers had establishments in both towns. The excellence, however, of the swords of Julian del Rey, who lived both at Saragossa and Toledo, is referred to by the keeper of the lions in Don Quixote. The weapons of this artist had their peculiar marks. El perillo, a little dog; el morillo, a Moor's head, and la loba, a wolf.§

But perhaps it may be thought I am passing the bounds of my subject. To return then to earlier days. The girdle round the waist, or the bauldrick descending from the shoulder across the body was simple tanned leather only, or sometimes its splendour rivalled that of prince Arthur in the Fairy Queen.

> Athwart his breast a bauldrick brave he ware
> That shind like twinkling stars, with stones most precious rare;
> * * * * *
> And in the midst thereof, one precious stone
> Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous mights,
> Shapt like a lady's head, exceeding shone,
> Like Hesperus among the lesser lights,
> And strove for to amaze the weaker sights:
> Thereby his mortal blade full comely hung
> In ivory sheath, ycarv'd with curious sights,
> Whose hilt was burnish'd gold, and handle strong
> Of mother perle, and buckled with a golden tong.
> Book 1, c. 7. st. 29, 30.

Many of the historical circumstances just now related regarding the sword of the knights are pleasingly exaggerated in the beautiful extravagancies of romantic fabling. The most famous sword in the imagination of our ancestors was that of king Arthur; it was called Escalibert (corrupted into Caliburn). The romance of Merlin thus explains the name. Escalibert est un nom Ebricu qui vault autant à dire en Français, comme tres cher fer et acier, et aussi dissoyent il vrai. The history of this sword enters largely into the romances of Arthur, and the knights of the round table, and the subject was fondly cherished by those who detailed the exploits of other heroes. The fame of Caliburn was remembered when Richard the first went to the East. The romances affirm that he wore the terrible and trusty sword of Arthur. But, instead of mowing down ranks of Saracens with it, he presented it to Tancred, king of Sicily.

> And Richard at that time gaf him a faire juelle.
> The good sword Caliburne, which Arthur luffed so well.*

The romancer followed the practices of the northern scalds,† of naming the swords of knights: that of Sir Bevis of Hampton was called Morglay; and that of the Emperor Charlemagne himself

* Chronicle of the Cid, p. 46.
† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. 1, p. 201.
‡ Hovedon.
§ Pellicer's note on Don Quixote, edit. Madrid, 1798. Dillon's Travels in Spain, p. 143.

* Robert of Brune.
† Wormius, Lit. Run., p. 110. Hickes Thes. vol. 1, p. 193.

Digitized by Google

Fusberta joyosa.* The poets were also as faithful delineators of manners as their predecessors the romance writers had been, and therefore we find in Ariosto that the sword of the courteous Rogero was called Balisarda, and that of Orlando, Durindana.

In the romance of Sir Otuel, the address of the same Orlando to his sword is perfectly in the spirit of chivalry.

Then he began to make his moan
And fast looked thereupon,
As he held it in his hond.
" O sword of great might,
Better bare never no knight,
To win with no lond!
Thou hasty — be in many batayle,
That never Sarazin, sans fayle
Ne might thy stroke withstond.
Go! let never no paynim
Into battle bear him,
After the death of Roland!
O sword of great powere,
In this world n'is nought thy peer,
Of no metal y—wrought;
All Spain and Galice,
Through grace of God and thee y—wis,
To Christendom ben brought.
Thou art good withouten blame;
In thee is graven the holy name
That all things made of nought."†

Regarding inscriptions on swords mentioned in the concluding lines, there is a very interesting passage in the romance of Giron the courteous. On one occasion where the chaste virtue of that gentle knight and noble companion of Arthur was in danger, his spear, which he had rested against a tree, fell upon his sword, and impelled it into a fountain. Giron immediately left the lady with whom he was conversing, and ran to the water. He snatched the weapon from the fountain, and, throwing away the scabbard, began to wipe the blade. Then his eyes lighted on the words that were written on the sword, and these were the words that were thus written :— Loyaulte passe tout, et faulsete si honneit tout, et deceit tous hommes dedans quals elle se herberge. This sentence acted with talismanic power upon the heart of that noble knight Giron the courteous, and so his virtue was saved.

Leaving those pictures of manners which the old romances have painted, I come to the defensive harness of the knight, a subject which has many claims to attention. The shield was held in equal esteem in chivalric as in classic times ; for

" To lose the badge that should his deeds display,"

was considered the greatest shame and fouldest scorn that could happen to a knight. The shape of the shield was oblong or triangular, wide at the top for the protection of the body, and tapering to the bottom.* Other shapes were given to it agreeably to the fancy of the knight, and it was plain or adorned with emblazonry of arms and other ornaments of gold and silver, according to his estate, and the simplicity or comparative refinement of his age. Some knights, as gentle as brave, adorned their shields with a portrait of their lady-love,† or stamped on them impresses quaint, with a device emblematical of their passion. Knights formed of sterner stuff retained their heraldic insignia, and their mottoes breathed war and homicide; but gallant cavaliers showed the gentleness of their minds, and their impressed sentences were sometimes plain of meaning, but oftener dark to all, except the knight himself, and the damsel whose playful wit had invented them. We can readily imagine that those amorous devices and impresses were not so frequently used in the battle-field as in the tournament, and that they were sometimes worn together with gentilitial distinctions.

The casing of the body is a very cu-

* The notion of applying the word jocosé to a sword is thus pleasantly dilated on by St. Palaye. "Ils ont continuellement repandu sur toutes les images de la guerre un air d'enjouement, qui leur est propre : ils n'ont jamais parlé que comme d'une fête, d'un jeu, et d'un passe-temps. *Jouer leur jeu*, ont-ils dit, les arbalétriérs qui faisoient pleuvoir une grêle de traits. *Jouer gros jeu*, pour donner battaile. *Jouer des mains*, et une infinité d'autres façons de parler semblables se recontrent souvent dans la lecture de recits militaires nos écrivains."

† Ellis' Metrical Romances, 2, 362.

* The shield therefore was fitted by its shape to bear a wounded knight from the field, and to that use it was frequently applied. Another purpose is alluded to in the spirited opening to the Lay of the Gentle bachelor.

" What gentle Bachelor is he
Sword-begot in fighting field,
Rock'd and cradled in a shield,
Whose infant food a helm did yield."

† Malmsbury, p. 170.

Digitized by Google

rious subject of inquiry. The simplicity of ancient times, in using the skins of beasts, is marked in the word *loricum*, from the word *lorum*, a thong, and the word *cuirasse* is traceable to *cuir*, leather. Body harness has three general divisions; mail; plate and mail mixed; plate mail entirely. Rows of iron rings, sown on the dress, were the first defences, and then, for additional defence, a row of larger rings was laid over the first. These rings gave way to small iron plates which lapped over each other, and this variety of mail is interesting, for armour now resembled the *lorica squammàta* of the Romans, and hence ancient mail of this description has generally been called scale-mail, while the ordinary appearance of armour being like the meshes of a net, gained it the title of mail from the *macula* of the Latins, and the *maglia* of the Italians. Sometimes the plates were square, and sometimes of a lozenge form: but it would be considering the matter much too curiously to divide armour into as many species as the shapes and forms which a small piece of iron or steel was capable of being divided into.*

All this variety of mail harness was sown on an under garment of leather or cloth, or a more considerable wadding of various sorts of materials, and called a gambeson. If the garment were a simple tunic or frock the whole was called a hauberk. The lower members were fended by *chausses*, which may be intelligible to modern understandings by the words breeches or pantaloons. When the mailed frock and *chausses* were joined, the union was called the haubergeon. In each case, the back and crown of the head were saved harmless by a hood of mail, which sometimes formed part of the hauberk or haubergeon, and sometimes was detached. In Spain, the hood and the other parts of the dress were united, if the case of the Cid be held as evidence of the general state of manners; for after his battles he is always represented as slowly quitting the field with his gory hood thrown back. The mail covered also the chin, and sometimes the mouth; in the latter case the office of breathing being entirely committed to the care of the nose. Finally, the sleeves of the jacket were carried over the fingers, and a continuation of the *chausses* protected the toes.

"A goodly knight all arm'd in harness meet
That from his head no place appeared to his feete."

It is curious that foppery in armour began at the toe. It was the fashion for the knight to have the toe of the mail several inches in length and inclining downwards. To fight on foot with such incumbrances was impossible, and therefore the enemies of the crusaders (for foppery prevailed even in religious wars) shot rather at the horses than at the men. The fashion I am speaking of crossed the Pyrenees, for in the pictoral representation of a tournament at Grenada, between Moorish and Christian knights, the former are drawn with the broad shovel shoes of their country, while the latter have long pointed shoes, like the cavaliers of the North.

Such were the various descriptions of mail armour from the earliest æra of chivalry to the thirteenth century. They were worn at different times in different countries, and often in the same country at the same time by different individuals: but at length so excellent an improvement was made in chain mail, that military fashion could have no longer any pretence for variety. The different descriptions of mail armour show the skill of the ironsmiths among our ancestors, and that they were capable of inventing the next and last great change. But as it was made at a time when the Asiatic mode of warfare was known in Europe, and as the improvement I am about to mention was the general mode of the Saracenian soldiers, it is as probable that it was borrowed as that it was invented. The rings of mail were now no longer sewn on the dress, but they were interlaced, each ring having four others inserted into it, and consequently the rings formed a garment of themselves. The best coats of mail were made of double rings.* The admirable

* Dr. Meyrick, in his huge work on armour, divides the sorts of this early mail into the rustred, the scaled, the trellissed, the purpointed, and the tegulated. The grave precision of this enumeration will amuse the curious inquirer into the infinite divisibility of matter.

* In a masterly dissertation upon Ancient Armour, in the sixtieth number of the Quarterly

Digitized by Google

convenience of this twisted or reticulated mail secured its general reception. A knight was no longer encumbered by his armour in travelling. His squire might be the bearer of his mail, for it was both flexible and compact, or it could be rolled upon the hinder part of a saddle.

Before, however, this last great improvement in mail-armour took place, changes were made in that general description of harness which foretold its final fall, although it might be partially and for a time supported by any particular invention of merit. Plates of solid steel or iron were fixed on the breast or other parts of the body, where painful experience had assured the wearer of the insufficiency of his metal rings. The new fashion of reticulated mail added nothing to the strength of defence, and, therefore, ingenuity and prudence were ever at work to make defensive armour equal to offensive. New plates continually were added, and many of them received their titles from the parts of the body which they were intended to defend: the pectoral protected the breast, the cuisses were for the thighs, the brassarts for the arms, the ailettes for the shoulders, while the gorget defended the throat, and a scaly guantlet gloved the hand. The cuirass was the title for the defence of the breast and the back. This mixed harness gained ground till the knight had nearly a double covering of mail and plate. The plate was then found a perfect defence, and the mail was gradually thrown aside; and thus, finally, the warrior was entirely clad in steel plates. This harness was exceedingly oppressive to the limbs, and therefore we find the circumstance so frequently mentioned in old writers, that when a knight alighted at his hostel or inn, he not only doffed his armour, but went into a bath. No wonder that it was necessary to keep changes of dress to present to the cavaliers who arrived. Plate armour must have been as destructive of clothes as the old chain mail, and describing his knight, Chaucer says.

> "Of fustian he wered a gipon
> Alle besmotred with his harbergeon.
> For he was of late y come fro his viage,
> And wente for to don his pilgrimage."

The plate harness was in one respect far more inconvenient than the armour it superseded. The coat of chain mail could be put on or slipped off with instantaneous celerity; but the dressing of a plate-armed knight was no simple matter.

> "From the tents
> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation."

Besides this depravation of rest before a battle, the knight, in order to prevent surprise, was obliged to wear his heavy harness almost constantly.

It is curious to observe, that chain mail formed some part of the harness of a knight until the very last days of chivalry, chivalric feelings seeming to be associated with that ancient form of armour. It was *let into* the plates round the neck, and thus there was a collar or tippet of mail; and it also generally hung over other parts of the body, where, agreeably to its shape and dimensions, it became, if I may again express myself in the language of ladies, if not of antiquarians, an apron or a short petticoat.

The armour of the knight was often crossed by a scarf of silk embroidered by his lady-love. He wore also a dress which in different times was variously designated as a surcoat, a cyclas, or a tabard. It was long* or short, it opened at the sides, in the back, or in the front, as fashion or caprice ruled the wearer's mind; but it was always sleeveless. Originally simple cloth was its material; but as times and luxury advanced it became richer. For the reason that this sort of dress was almost the only one in which the lords, knights, and barons

Review, it is said, that "though chain-mail was impervious to a sword-cut, yet it afforded no defence against the bruising stroke of the ponderous battle-axe and martel; it did not always resist the shaft of the long or cross-bow, and still less could it repel the thrust of the lance or the long-pointed sword." There is a slight mistake here. All good coats of mail were formed of duplicated rings, and their impenetrability to a lance thrust was an essential quality. "Induitur lorica incomparabili, quæ maculis duplicibus intexta, nullius lanceæ ictibus transforabilis haberetur." Mon. l. 1. ann. 1127.

* Froissart describes Sir John Chandos as dressed in a long robe, which fell to the ground, blazoned with his arms on white sarcenet, argent a field gules, one on his breast, and another on his back.

Digitized by Google

could display their magnificence, and because it covered all their clothing and armour, they had it usually made of cloths of gold or silver, of rich skins, furs of ermine, sables, minever, and others.* There was necessarily more variety in the appearance of the surcoat than in that of any other part of his harness, and hence it became the distinction of a knight. In public meetings and in times of war the lords and knights were marked by their coats of arms; and when they were spoken of, or when any one wished to point them out by an exterior sign, it was sufficient to say that he wears a coat of or, argent, gules, sinople, gris, ermine, or vair, or still shorter, he bears or, gules, &c., the words coat of arms being understood. But as these marks were not sufficient to distinguish in solemn assemblies, or in times of war every lord, when all were clothed in coats of arms of gold, silver, or rich furs, they, in process of time, thought proper to cut the cloths of gold, and silver, and furs, which they wore over their armour, into various shapes of different colours, observing, however, as a rule, never to put fur on fur, nor cloths of gold on those of silver, nor those of silver on gold; but they intermixed the cloths with the furs, in order to produce variety and relief.† With these cloths and furs were mingled devices or cognisances symbolical of some circumstance in the life of the knight, and with the crest the whole formed in modern diction the coat of arms.

Every feudal lord assumed the right of choosing his own armorial distinctions: they were worn by all his family, and were hereditary. It was also in his power to grant arms to knights and squires as marks of honour for military merit; and from all these causes armorial distinctions represented the feudalism, the gentry, and the chivalry of Europe. One knight could not give more deadly offence to another than by wearing his armorial bearings without his permission, and many a lance was broken to punish such insolence. Kings, as their power arose above that of the aristocracy, assumed the right of conferring these distinctions; —an assumption of arms without royal permission was an offence, and the business of heralds was enlarged from that of being mere messengers between hostile princes into a court for the arranging of armorial honours. Thus the usurpation of kings was beneficial to society, for disputes regarding arms and cognisances were settled by heralds and not by battle.

It is totally impossible to mark the history of these circumstances. Instances of emblazoned sopra vests are to be met with in times anterior to the crusades. They were worn during the continuance of mail and of mixed armour: but they gradually went out of usage as plate armour became general, it being then very much the custom to enamel or emboss the heraldic distinctions on the armour itself, or to be contented with its display on the shield or the banner. On festival occasions and tournaments, however, all the gorgeousness of heraldic splendour was exhibited upon the cyclas or tabard.

A word may be said on the surcoats of the military orders. The knights of St. John and the Temple wore plain sopra vests, and their whole harness was covered by a monastic mantle, marked with the crosses of their respective societies. The colour of the mantle worn by the knights of St. John was black, and from that colour being the usual monastic one, they were called the military friars. Their cross was white. The brethren of the Temple wore a white mantle with a red cross, and hence their frequent title, the Red Cross Knights.

The history of the covering of the head is not altogether unamusing. The knight was not contented to trust the protection of that part of himself to his mailed hood alone; he wore a helmet, whose shape was at first conical, then cylindrical, and afterwards resumed its pristine form. The defence of the face became a matter of serious consideration, and a broad piece of iron was made to connect the frontlet of the helm with the mail over the mouth.* This nasal piece was not in general use, it being a very imperfect

* Du Cange, Dissert. the first on Joinville. The extravagance of people in the middle ages on the subject of furs is the theme of perpetual complaint with contemporary authors. By two statutes of the English parliament, holden at London in 1334 and 1363, all persons who could not expend one hundred pounds a-year were forbidden to wear furs.

† Du Cange, ubi supra.

* Montfaucon, Pl. 2. xiv. 7, and Gough, i. 137.

Digitized by Google

protection from a sword-cut, and the knight found it of more inconvenience than service when his vanquisher held him to earth by it. Cheek-pieces of bars, placed horizontally or perpendicularly, attached to the helmet, were substituted or introduced. Then came the aventaile, or iron mask, joined to the helmet, with apertures for the eyes and mouth. It was at first fixed and immoveable, but ingenuity afterwards assisted those face defences. By means of pivots the knight could raise or let fall the plates or grating before the face, and the defence was called a visor. Subsequently, plates were brought up from the chin, and this moveable portion of the hemlet was called, as most people know, the bever, from the Italian *bevere*, to drink. In early times the helmet was without ornament; it afterwards (though the exact time it is impossible to fix) was surmounted by that part of the armorial bearings called the crest. A lady's glove or scarf was often introduced, and was not the least beautiful ornament. The Templars and the knights of St. John were not permitted to adorn their helmets with the tokens either of nobility or of love; the simplicity of religion banishing all vain heraldic distinctions, and the soldier-priests being obliged, like the monks themselves, to pretend to that ascetic virtue which was so highly prized in the middle ages.

All the splendour of chivalry is comprised in the helmet of prince Arthur.

"His haughty helmet, horrid all with gold,
Both glorious brightness and great terror bred;
For all the crest a dragon did enfold
With greedy paws, and over all did spred
His golden wings: his dreadful hideous head
Close couched on the bever, seem'd to throw
From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red,
That sudden horror to faint hearts did show,
And scaly tail was stretch'd adowne his back full low.

"Upon the top of all his lofty crest
A bunch of hairs discoloured diversely,
With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest,
Did shake and seem'd to dance for jollity,
Like to an almond-tree ymounted hye
On top of green Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender locks do tremble every one
At every little breath that under heaven is blown."*

* Fairy Queen, Book i., canto vii., st. 31, 32.

The helmet, with its visor and bever, was carried by the squire, or page, on the pommel of his saddle, a very necessary measure for the relief of the knight, particularly when the sarcasm of the Duke of Orleans was applicable, that "if the English had any intellectual armour in their heads, they could never wear such heavy head-pieces."*

The reader should know, with the barber in Don Quixote, that, except in the hour of battle, a knight wore only an open casque, or bacinet, a light and easy covering. The bacinet derived its title from its resemblance to a basin; but the word was sometimes used, however improperly, for the helmet, the close helmet of knighthood. A visor might be attached to the bacinet, and then the covering for the head became a helmet. Bacinez à visieres are often spoken of.

The helmet of war appeared to complete the perfection of defensive harness; for the lance broke hurtless on the plate of steel, the arrow and quarrel glanced away, and it is only in romance that we read of swords cutting through a solid front of iron, or piercing both plate and mail, as some bolder spirits say.

"From top to toe no place appeared bare,
That deadly dint of steel endanger may."†

The only way by which death could be inflicted was by thrusting a lance through the small holes in the visor. Such a mode of death was not very common, for the cavalier always bent his face almost to the saddle-bow when he charged. The knight, however, might be unhorsed in the shock of the two adverse lines, and he was in that case at the mercy of the foe who was left standing. But how to kill the human being enclosed in the rolling mass of steel was the question; and the armourer, therefore, invented a thin dagger, which could be inserted between the plates. This dagger was called the dagger of mercy, apparently a curious title, considering it was the instrument of death; but, in truth, the laws of chivalry obliged the conqueror to show mercy, if, when the dagger was drawn, the prostrate foe yielded himself, rescue or no rescue.

* Shakspeare, Henry V., Act. iii., sc. 7.
† Fairy Queen, Book i., c. 7, st. 29.

Digitized by Google

It may be noticed that a dagger or short sword was worn by the knight even in days of chain mail, for the hauberk was a complete case.

"Straight from his courser leaps the victor knight,
And bares his deadly blade to end the fight;
The uplifted hauberk's skirt he draws aside,
In his foe's flank the avenging steel is dyed."*

Froissart's pages furnish us with an interesting tale, descriptive of the general chivalric custom, regarding the dagger of mercy. About the year 1390, the lord of Langurante in Gascony rode forth with forty spears and approached the English fortress called Cadilhac. He placed his company in ambush, and said to them, "Sirs, tarry you still here, and I will go and ride to yonder fortress alone, and see if any will issue out against us." He then rode to the barriers of the castle, and desired the keeper to show to Bernad Courant, their captain, how that the lord Langurante was there, and desired to joust with him a course. "If he be so good a man, and so valiant in arms as it is said," continued the challenger, "he will not refuse it for his ladies sake: if he do, it shall turn him to much blame, for I shall report it wheresoever I go, that for cowardice he hath refused to run with me one course with a spear."

A squire of Bernard reported this message to his master, whose heart beginning to swell with ire, he cried, "Get me my harness, and saddle my horse; he shall not go refused." Incontinently he was armed, and mounted on his war steed, and taking his shield and spear, he rode through the gate and the barriers into the open field. The lord Langurante seeing him coming was rejoiced, and couched his spear like a true knight, and so did Bernard. Their good horses dashed at each other, and their lances struck with such equal fierceness that their shields fell in pieces, and as they crossed Bernard shouldered sir Langurante's horse in such a manner that the lord fell out of the saddle. Bernard turned his steed shortly round, and as the lord Langurante was rising, his foe, who was a strong as well as a valiant squire, took his bacinet with both his hands, and wrenching it from his head, cast it under his horse's feet. On seeing all this the lord of Langurante's men quitted their ambush, and were coming to the rescue of their master, when Bernard drew his dagger, and said to the lord, "Sir, yield you my prisoner, rescue or no rescue; or else you are but dead." The lord, who trusted to the rescue of his men, spoke not a word; and Bernard then gave him a death-blow on his bare head, and dashing spurs into his horse, he fled within the barriers.*

Such was the general state of armour in days of chivalry. A more detailed account of the subject cannot be interesting; for what boots it to know the exact form of dimensions of any of the numerous plates of steel that encased the knight. Nor indeed was any shape constant long; for fashion was as variable and imperious in all her changes in those times as in ours; and as we turn with contempt from the military foppery of the present day, little gratification can be expected from too minute an inspection of the vanities of our forefathers. Chaucer says,

"With him ther wenten knights many on,
Some wol ben armed in an habergeon,
And in a breast-plate, and in a gipon;
And som wol have a pair of plates large;
And som wol have a pruse sheld or a targe.
Som wol ben armed on his legges well,
And have an axe, and some a mace stele.
Ther n' is no newe guise, that it n' as old.
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinion."

A chronological history of armour, minutely accurate, is unattainable, if any deduction may be made from the books of laborious dulness which have hitherto appeared on the armour of different countries. Who can affirm that the oldest specimen which we possess of any particular form of harness is the earliest specimen of its kind? No one can determine the precise duration of a fashion; for after ruling the world for some time it suddenly disappears, but some years afterwards it rears its head again to the confusion and dismay of our antiquarians.

Our best authorities sometimes fail us. The monumental effigies were not always carved at the moment of the knight's

* Lay of the Knight and the Sword.

* Froissart, livre i., c. 342.

Digitized by Google

death: that the bust is tardily raised to buried merit is not the peculiar reproach of our times. It is complimenting the sculptors of the middle ages too highly if we suppose that they did not sometimes violate accuracy, in order to introduce some favourite fashion of their own days. As for the illuminations of manuscripts which are so much boasted of, they are often the attempts of a scribe to imitate antiquity, beautiful in respect of execution, but of problematical accuracy, and more frequently mark the age when the manuscript was copied, than that when the work was originally written. We know that violation of costume was common in the romances. Thus, in the Morte d'Arthur, an unknown knight, completely armed, and having his visor lowered so as to conceal his features, entered the hall of the king. Again,

> "Cometh Sir Launcelot du Lake,
> Ridand right into the hall;
> His steed and armour all was blake,
> His visere over his eyen falle."*

Now if the romance whence the above lines are extracted is to be considered as a picture of the earliest days of chivalry it is certainly incorrect, for it was not before the middle age of knighthood that the face was concealed by a visor, the earlier defence of the nasal piece certainly not serving as a mask. The romances are unexceptionable witnesses for the general customs of chivalry, but we cannot fix their statements to any particular time, for they were varied and improved by successive repetitions and transcriptions, and when they were rendered into prose still further changes were made in order to please the taste of the age. Thus, in an old Danish romance, a knight fighting for his lady remains on his horse; but when in the fifteenth century the tale was translated into the idioms of most chivalric countries, he is represented as alighting from his milk-white steed and giving it to his fair companion to hold; and the reason of this departure from the old ballad was that the translators, wishing to make their work popular, adapted it to the manners of the age; and it was the general fashion then for the knights to dismount when they fought.

In spite of all our attempts at chronological accuracy, something or other is perpetually baffling us. We commonly think that mixed armour was the defensive harness in the days of our Edward the Third: but in Chaucer's portrait of the knightly character of that time, only the haubergeon is assigned to the cavalier. Plate-armour seems to have been the général costume of the fifteenth century; and in any pictorial exhibition of the murder of John Duke of Burgundy in the year 1419, the artist who should represent the Duke as harnessed in chain-mail, would be condemned by a synod of archæologists as guilty of an unpardonable anachronism; yet we know, on the unquestionable authority of Monstrelet, that when the Duke lay on the ground, Olivier Layer, assisted by Pierre Frotier, thrust a sword under the haubergeon into his belly; and that after he had been thus cruelly murdered, the Dauphin's people stripped from him his coat of mail.* But though it is difficult to determine the fashion of any part of armour in any particular century, and life may afford nobler occupations than considering the precise year and month when the Normans gave up the clumsy expedient of inserting the sword through a hole in the hauberk, and adopted the more graceful and convenient form of a belt,† yet viewing the subject of armour in some of its broad features, matter of no slight interest may be found. We may not regard the precise form and fashion of a warrior's scarf, or care to inquire whether the embroidery were worked with gold or silver, but the general fact itself involves the state of manners and feelings among our ancestors:

* Ellis's Specimens of Metrical Romances, i. 328, 366.

* Monstrelet, Johnes's edition, vol. v., p. 121, 126, et prestement un nommé Olivier Layet à l'ayde de Pierre Frotier lui bouta une espée par dessoules son haulbergeon tout dedans le ventre, &c. — En apres le dessusdit duc mis à mort, comme dit est fut tantost par les gens du Daulphin desuestude sa robbe, de son haulbergeon, &c. Monstrelet, vol. i., c. 212, 213.

† Books of military costume may illustrate the truth, how important every man's occupation is in his own eyes. The old French writer, Fauchet, has devoted some pages to a description of the regular process of dressing, and his example has been followed by some of our English antiquarians.

Digitized by Google

it carries us to the lady's bower where she was working this token of love; our fancy paints the time and mode of bestowing it; and we follow it through all the subsequent career of the knight as his silent monitor to courage and loyalty.

It is curious also to mark the perpetual efforts of defensive armour to meet the improvements in the art of destruction. Chain-mail was found an inadequate protection; plates of steel were added, and still this mixed harness did not render the body invulnerable. The covering of steel alone at length became complete, and defensive harness reached its perfection. It is utterly impossible for us to state with accuracy the year when plate-armour began to be mixed with chain-mail in any particular country, or to determine what particular part of the body the first plate that was used defended; but the general features of the subject are known well enough to enable us to sketch to our imagination the military costume of some of the most remarkable events in the warfare of the middle ages. In the first crusade, the armour was in the rude state of mail worn on the tunic. There was the emblazoned surcoat, for that part of dress was of very early use; the hood was the common covering of the head, and when the helmet was worn it was of the simplest form, and occasionally had a nasal piece. The crusades began at the close of the eleventh century, and before the end of the thirteenth, not only was the hauberk composed of twisted mail, but mixed armour of plate and mail was common. The English wars in France during the reign of our Edward III. are the next subject to which our chivalric recollections recur. By that time plate had attained a general predominance over chain-mail. Perhaps, at no period of chivalry was armour more beautiful than in those days when France was one vast tilting ground for the culled and choice-drawn cavaliers of the two mighty monarchies of Europe. It was equally removed from the gloomy sternness of chain-mail, and the elaborate foppery of embossed steel: its solid plates satisfied the judicious eye by showing that the great principle of armour was chiefly attended to, and the surcoat and scarf gave the warrior's harness a character of neat and simple elegance. The horses, too, were barded in the most vulnerable parts: the symmetry of the form not being obscured, as it was in aftertimes by a casing of steel which left one part of the legs free of action. The helmet had its crest and silken ornament; the former being the sign of nobility, the latter of love: and no warriors were so justly entitled to those graceful tokens of ladies' favour, as the warriors of Edward III., for love was the inspiring soul of their chivalry.*

In the second series of our French wars complete plate-armour was in general fashion. Gradually, as armour became more and more ponderous, the knights preferred to fight on foot with their lances. That mode of encoun-

* In Dr. Meyrick's three ponderous quartos on Armour, there is one interesting point: he shows that the celebrated title of the Black Prince, which the Prince of Wales gained for his achievements at the battle of Cressy, did not arise, as is generally supposed, from his wearing black armour on that day, nor does it appear that he ever wore black armour at all. Plain steel armour was his usual wear, and the surcoat was emblazoned with the arms of England labelled. When he attended tournaments in France or England he appeared in a surcoat with a shield, and his horse in a caparison all black with the white feathers on them; so that the colour of the covering of the armour, and not of the armour itself, gave him his title. Dr. Meyrick thinks the common story an erroneous one, that the ostrich feathers in the crest of our princes of Wales arose from young Edward's taking that ornament from the helmet of the king of Bohemia, who was slain by him at the battle of Cressy. He contends that the feathers formed a *device* on the banner of the monarch, and were not worn on the helmet, because plumes of feathers were not used as crests till the fifteenth century. That Dr. Meyrick has not been able to find any instance of their being thus worn goes but very little way to prove the negative. On the other hand, we know that the swan's neck, the feathers of favourite birds, such as the peacock and pheasant, were devices on shields, and also at the same time continually surmounted the helmet, and the ostrich feathers, which ever since the crusades the western world had been familiar with, might in all probability have been used in this twofold manner. How the King of Bohemia wore his we do not know with historic certainty, but it is very difficult to believe that he, or our chivalric ancestors, with their love of splendid ornaments, would have been contented with placing the ostrich feathers as a mere device on a shield, and not have also fixed it where they set every thing peculiarly graceful, on the summit of the helm.

Digitized by Google

ter was found best fitted for the display of skill, for in the rude encounter of the horses many cavaliers were thrown, and the field presented a ludicrous spectacle of rolling knights.* Some traces of the custom of chivalry dismounting may be found in the twelfth century. The practice grew as plate-armour became mixed with mail; and when complete suits of steel were worn, knights sought every occasion of dismounting; and they were wont to break their lances short for the convenience of the close conflict.

As the spirit of chivalry died away, the military costume of chivalry increased in brilliancy and splendour. Ingenuity and taste were perpetually varying decorations: the steel was sometimes studded with ornaments of gold and silver, and sometimes the luxury of the age was displayed in a complete suit of golden armour.

> "In arms they stood
> Of golden panoply, refulgent host."

But such splendour was only exhibited in the courteous tournament; less costly armour sheathed the warrior of the working day. Armour gradually fell out of use as infantry began to be considered and felt as the principal force in war. It was not, however, till the beginning of the seventeenth century that the proud nobility of Europe would abandon the mode of combat of their ancestors, and no longer hope that their iron armour of proof should hang up in their halls as an incentive to their children's valour. "The first laid aside the jambes or steel boots; then the shield was abandoned, and next the covering for the arms. When the cavalry disused the lance, the cuisses were no longer worn to guard against its thrust, and the stout leathern or buff coat hung down from beneath the body armour to the knees, and supplied the place of the discarded steel. The helmet was later deprived of its useless visor; but before the middle of the seventeenth century nothing remained of the ancient harness, but the open cap and the breasts and backs of steel, which the heavy cavalry of the Continent have more or less worn to our times. In our service these have been but lately revived for the equipment of the finest cavalry in Europe, the British Life-guards, who, unaided by such defences, tore the laurels of Warterloo from the cuirassiers of France."*

The history of armour would be interesting in another point of view, if any of the great battles in the middle ages had been decided by the superior qualities of any particular weapon possessed by either side. No such circumstances are recorded. Nor can we trace the progress of armour through the various countries of chivalry. But the superiority of Italian civilization, and our knowledge that the long pointed sword was invented in Italy, authorize our giving much honour to the Italians; and we also know that down to the very latest period of chivalric history Milanese armour was particularly esteemed.† Germany, as far as the ancient martial costume of that country is known, can claim nothing of invention, nor did armour always take in that country during its course from Italy through other lands. France quickly received all the varieties in armour of Italian ingenuity. and in a few years they passed into England. This geographical course was not, however, the usual mode of communicating ideas in chivalric ages. Knights of various countries met in tournaments,

* A very singular instance of the inconvenience of heavy armour occurred in the year 1427, during a war between the Milanese and the Venetians. Carmagnola, the Venetian general, had skilfully posted his army behind a morass, the surface of which, from the dryness of the season, was capable of bearing the weight of infantry. He irritated the enemy (the Milanese) to attack him, by capturing the village of Macalo before their eyes, but their heavy cavalry had no sooner charged along the causeway intersecting the marshy ground, which he purposely left unguarded, than his infantry assailed them with missiles on both flanks. In attempting to repulse them the Milanese cuirassiers sank into the morass: their column was crowded on the narrow passage, and thrown into confusion, and the infantry of Carmagnola then venturing among them on the causeway, and stabbing their horses, made prisoners of the dismounted cuirassiers to the number of eight thousand, as they lay helpless under the enormous weight of their own impervious armour. Percival's History of Italy, vol. ii., p. 77.

* Quarterly Review, No. lx., p. 351.

† In marking the progress of chivalry through Italy I shall again have occasion to notice the excellence of the Milanese armour.

Digitized by Google

and in those spendid scenes every description of armour was displaced, and fashions were interchanged.

Notwithstanding the general similarity of costume which these gallant and friendly meetings of cavaliers in tournaments were likely to produce, each nation had its peculiarities which it never resigned. Thus it may be mentioned that the swords of the Germans and also of the Normans were always large, and that those of the French were short. As the bow was the great weapon of the Normans, the attendants of the English knights used the bow more frequently than similar attendants in any other country. The peasantry of Scotland, in spite of repeated statutes, never would use the bow: spears and axes were their weapons, while their missiles were cross-bows and culverins. The mace was also a favourite, and their swords were of excellent temper. Their defensive armour was the plate-jack, hauberk, or brigantine, and a voluminous handkerchief round their neck, "not for cold but for cutting," as one of their writers describes it. Almost all the Scottish forces, except a few knights, men-at-arms, and the border prickers, who formed excellent light cavalry, acted upon foot.*

Little need be said concerning the military costume of the esquire, and the men-at-arms. The esquire wore silver spurs in distinction from the golden spurs of the knight; but when an esquire as a member of the third class of chivalry held a distinct command, he was permitted to bear at the end of his lance a penoncel, or small triangular streamer. In countries where the bow was not used, the weapons of the men-at-arms were generally the lance and the sword. This was the case when the knight led his personal retainers to battle; but when his followers were the people of any particular town which he protected, few chivalric arms were borne, and the bill more frequently than the spear was brought into the field. The cross-bow can hardly be considered a weapon of chivalry. It required no strength of arm like the long bow; it allowed none of that personal display which was the soul of knighthood. The popes, to their honour, frequently condemned its use; and it was more often bent by the mercenaries, than the regular attendants of knights.

The men-at-arms generally fought on horseback, and it often happened that archers, after the Asiatic mode, were mounted. The defensive armour of the knight's attendants was not so complete as his own, for they could not afford its costliness, and difference of rank was marked by difference of harness. Thus, in France, only persons possessed of a certain estate were permitted to wear the haubergeon, while esquires had nothing more than a simple coat of mail, without hood or hose,* though their rank in nobility might equal that of the knights. The men-at-arms had generally the pectoral and the shield, and the morion or open helmet, without visor or bever. They frequently wore a long and large garment called the aketon, gambeson, or jack, formed of various folds of linen cloth or leather: but it is totally impossible to give any useful or interesting information on a subject which caprice or poverty perpetually varied.

Armour had other purposes in the mind of the knight besides its common and apparent use. Days of chivalry were especially times when imagination was in its freest exercise, and every thing was full of allegories and recondite meanings. To the knight a sword was given in resemblance of a cross to signify the death of Christ, and to instruct him that he ought to destroy the enemies of religion by the sword. This is intelligible; but there is something apparently arbitrary in the double edge signifying that a knight should maintain chivalry and justice. The spear, on account of its straitness, was the emblem of truth, and the iron head meant strength, which truth should possess. The force and power of courage were expressed by the mace. The helmet conveyed the idea of shamefacedness; and the hauberk was emblematical of the spiritual panoply which should protect a man and a soldier from the vices to which his nature was liable. The spurs meant diligence. The gorget was the sign of obedience; for as the gorget went about the neck protecting it from wounds, so the virtue of obedience kept a knight within the commands of

* Note 8, on Marmion, canto 5.

* Grose, ii. 246.

Digitized by Google

his sovereign and the order of chivalry; and thus neither treason nor any other foe to virtue corrupted the oath he had taken to his lord and knighthood. The shield showed the office of a knight, for as the knight placed his shield between himself and his enemy, so the knight was the barrier between the king and the people, and as the stroke of a sword fell upon the shield and saved the knight, so it behoved the knight to present his body before his lord when he was in danger. The equipment and barding of the horse furnished also subjects of instruction. The saddle meant safety of courage; for as by the saddle a knight was safe on his horse, so courage was the knight's best security in the field. The great size of the saddle was regarded as emblematical of the greatness of the chivalric charge. It was added, that as the head of a horse went before its rider, so should reason precede all the acts of a knight; and as the armour at the head of a horse defended the horse, so reason kept the knight from blame. The defensive armour of a horse illustrated the necessity of wealth to a knight; for a knight without estate could not maintain the honours of chivalry, and be protected from temptation, for poverty opens the door to treason and vice.

It was in this manner that the romantic imaginations of the knights of chivalry drew moralities from subjects apparently little capable of furnishing instruction; and then assuming a more sober and rational tone, they would exclaim that chivalry was not in the horse, nor in the arms, but was in the knight, who taught his horse well, and accustomed himself and his sons to noble actions and virtuous deeds; and a foul and recreant knight, who taught himself and his son evil words, converted one into the other, the cavaleresque and equestrian qualities, making himself and his son beasts, and his horse a knight.*

Before we close our account of the cavalier's equipment, something must be said regarding his steed, his *good* steed, as he was fond of calling him. The horse of the knight was necessarily an animal of great power when his charge was a cavalier with his weighty armour. The horses of Spain were highly famed. In the country itself those of Asturia were preferred, but in other chivalric states they regarded not the particular province wherein the horse was bred.* The favourite steed of William the Conqueror came from Spain. The crusades were certainly the means of bringing Asiatic horses into Europe; and it was found that the Arabian, though smaller than the bony charger of the west, had a compensating power in his superior spirit. French and English romance writers were not from natural prejudices disposed to praise any productions of Heathenesse, yet the Arabian horse is frequently commended by them. That doughty knight, Guy, a son of Sir Bevis of Hampton,

> ——— "Bestrode a *Rabyte*,†
> That was mickle and nought *light*,‡
> That Sir Bevis in Paynim lond
> Had iwunnen with his hond."

The Arab horse was the standard of perfection, as is evident from the romancer's praise of the two celebrated steeds, Favel and Lyard, which Richard Cœur de Lion procured at Cyprus.

> "In the world was not their peer,
> Dromedary, nor destreer,
> Steed, Rabyte, ne Camayl,
> That ran so swift sans fail.
> For a thousand pounds of gold
> Should not that one be sold."

The Arabian horse must have been already prepared for part of the discipline of a chivalric horse. On his own sandy plains he had been accustomed to stop his career when his fleetness had cast the rider from his seat; and in the encounter of lances so often were knights overthrown, that to stand firm, ready to be mounted again, was a high quality of a good horse. The steed of the Cid was very much celebrated in Spain; and, in acknowledgment for an act of great kind-

* Caxton, Fayt of Armes and of Chyvalrye, c. 62, &c. If the reader be curious for information on the subject of the allegories which were formed from the armour and dress of the Knights of the Garter and the Bath, he will find it in Anstis's Register of the Garter, p. 119, 120, and his History of the Knighthood of the Bath, p. 77–80.

* Asturco aextrarius est, Astur caput ejus
Nam prius Astur equum dextrandi repperit usum.
Ebrardus Betuniensis in Græcismo, c. 7.

† An Arabian horse. ‡ Weak.

Digitized by Google

ness, the owner wished to present him to the king, Alfonso of Castile. To induce the king to accept him, he showed his qualities.

"With that the Cid, clad as he was in mantle furr'd and wide,
On Bavieca vaulting, put the rowel in his side;
And up and down, and round and round, so fierce was his career,
Stream'd like a pennon on the wind Ruy Diaz' minivere.

"And all that saw them prais'd them, — they lauded man and horse,
As matched well, and rivalless for gallantry and force.
Ne'er had they look'd on horseman might to this knight come near,
Nor on other charger worthy of such a cavalier.

"Thus, to and fro a-rushing, the fierce and furious steed,
He snapp'd in twain his hither rein: — 'God pity now the Cid;'
'God pity Diaz,' cried the Lords; — but when they look'd again.
They saw Ruz Diaz ruling him with the fragment of his rein;
They saw him proudly ruling, with gesture firm and calm,
Like a true Lord commanding, — and obey'd as by a lamb.

"And so he led him foaming and panting to the king.
But 'No,' said Don Alphonso, 'it were a shameful thing
That peerless Bavieca should ever be bestrid,
By any mortal but Bivar, — mount, mount again, my Cid.' "*

It has been often said that the knight had always his ambling palfrey, on which he rode till the hour of battle arrived; and that the war-horse, from the circumstance of his being led by the right hand of the squire, was called dextrarius.† With respect to sovereigns and men of great estate this was certainly the custom, but was by no means a general chivalric practice. Froissart's pages are a perfect picture of knightly riding and combating; and each of his favourite cavaliers seems to have had but one and the same steed for the road and the battle-plain. Even romance, so prone to exaggerate, commonly represents the usage as similar; for when we find that a damsel is rescued, she is not placed upon a spare horse, but the knight mounts her behind himself.*

The *destrier*, *cheval de lance*, or war-steed, was armed or barded† very much on the plan of the harness of the knight himself, and was defended, therefore, by mail or plate, agreeably to the fashion of the age. His head, chest, and flanks were either wholly or partially protected, and sometimes, on occasions of pomp, he was clad in complete steel, with the arms of his master engraven or embossed on his bardings. His caparisons and housings frequently descended so low that they were justly termed bases, from the French *bas à bas*, upon the ground. His head, too, was ornamented with a crest, like the helmet of a knight. The bridle of the horse was always as splendid as the circumstances of the knight allowed; and thus a horse was often called Brigliadore, from *briglia d'oro*, a bridle of gold. The knight was fond of ornamenting the partner of his perils and glories. The horse was not always like that of Chaucer's knight;

"His hors was good, but he was not gay."

Bells was a very favourite addition to the equipment of a horse, particularly in the early times of chivalry. An old Troubadour poet, Arnold of Marsan, states very grave reasons for wearing them. He says, "Let the neck of the knight's horse be garnished with bells

* Lockhart's Spanish Ballads, p. 66.

† William of Newbridge, c. 11, lib. ii. Brunetus in Thesauro, MS. part 1, c. 155, says, "Il y a chevaus de plusieurs manieres, à ce que li un sont déstreir quant pour li combat, li auter sont palefroy pour chevaucher à l'aise de son pour li autres son roueis pour sommes porter," &c., and the continuator of Nangis says, "Et apres venoient les grans chevaux et palefrois du roy tres rechement ensellez, et les valets les menaient en dextre sur autres rouissins."

* History of the Crusades, vol. i., p. 357, note.

† Lest the reader's mind should wander in conjecture regarding the purpose of barding a horse, I will transcribe, for his instruction and illumination, a few lines from Dr. Meyrick's Chronological Inquiry into Ancient Armour, vol. ii., p. 126. "The principal reason for arming the horse in plate as well as his rider, was to preserve his life, on which depended the life or liberty of the man-at-arms himself; for when he was unhorsed, the weight of his own armour prevented him from speedily recovering himself or getting out of the way, when under the animal. Besides this, by thus preserving the horse, the expense of another was saved." Wonderful!

Digitized by Google

well hung. Nothing is more proper to inspire confidence in a knight, and terror in an enemy." The war-horse of a soldier of a religious order of knighthood might have his collar of bells, for their jangling was loved by a monk himself.

"And when he rode men might his bridel hear,
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,
And eke as loud as doth the chapel bell."

But here the comparison ceases, for the horse-furniture of the religious soldiers was ordered to be free from all golden and silver ornaments.* This regulation was, however, ill observed; for the knight-templars in the middle of the thirteenth century was censured for having their bridles embroidered, or gilded, or adorned with silver.†

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHIVALRIC CHARACTER.

General Array of Knights.—Companions in Arms.—The Nature of a Cavalier's Valiancy.—Singular Bravery of Sir Robert Knowles.—Bravery incited by Vows.—Fantastic Circumstances.—The Humanities of Chivalric War.—Ransoming.—Reason of Courtesies in Battles.—Curious Pride of Knighthood.—Prisoners.—Instance of Knightly Honour.—Independence of Knights, and Knight Errantry.—Knights fought the Battles of other Countries.—English Knights dislike Wars in Spain.—Thier disgust at Spanish Wines.—Principles of their active Conduct.—Knightly independence consistent with Discipline.—Religion of the Knight.—His Devotion.—His Intolerance.—General Nature of his Virtue.—Fidelity to Obligations.—Generousness.—Singular instance of it.—Romantic excess of it.—Liberality.—Humility.—Courtesy.—EVERY DAY LIFE OF THE KNIGHT.—Falconry.—Chess playing.—Story of a Knight's Love of Chess.—Minstrelsy.—Romances.—Conversation.—Nature and Form of Chivalric Entertainments.—Festival and Vow of the Pheasant.

THE knight was accompanied into the field by his squires and pages, by his armed vassals on horseback and on foot, all bearing his cognisance. The number of these attendants varied necessarily with his estate, and also the occasion that induced him to arm; and I should weary, without instructing my readers, were I to insert in these volumes all the pretty details of history regarding the amount of force which in various countries, and in different periods of the same country's annals, constituted, to use the phraseology of the middle ages, the complement of a lance. Armies were reckoned by lances, each lance meaning the knight himself with his men-at-arms, or lighter cavalry, and his foot soldiers.

The knight was not only supported by his vassals, who formed the furniture of his lance, but by his brother in arms, when such an intercourse subsisted between two cavaliers; and instances of such unions are extremely frequent in chivalric history: they may be met with in other animals. In the early days of Greece, brotherhood in arms was a well-known form of friendship: the two companions engaged never to abandon each other in affairs however perilous, and in pledge of their mutual faith they exchanged armour. No stronger proof of affection could be given than thus parting with what they held most dear. Among barbarous people the fraternity of arms was established by the horrid custom of the new brothers drinking each other's blood: but if this practice was barbarous, nothing was farther from barbarism than the sentiment which inspired it.

The chivalry of Europe borrowed this sacred bond from the Scandinavians, among whom the future brothers in arms mingled their blood, and then tasted it.

"Father of Slaughter, Odin, say,
Rememberest not the former day,
When ruddy in the goblet stood,
For mutual drink, our blended blood?
Rememberest not, thou then did'st swear,
The festive banquet ne'er to share,
Unless thy brother Lok was there?"*

This custom, like most others of Pagan Europe, was corrected and softened

* Statutes of the Templars, c. 37.
† Vincent de Beauvais, Hist. lib. 30, c. 85.

* From the Loka Lenna, or Strife of Loc, cited in the notes on Sir Tristrem, p. 350; St. Palaye, "Memoires sur l'ancienne Chevaliere," partie 3; Du Cange, Twenty-first Dissertation on Joinville; Glossary, Arma Mutare, Companionship in weal and wo sanctioned by religious solemnities, still exist among the Albanians and other people of the eastern shore of the Adriatic. The custom is wrought into a very interesting story in the tale of Anastasius, vol. i., c. 7.

Digitized by Google

by the light and humanity of religion. Fraternal adoptions then took place in churches, in presence of relations, and with the sanction of priests. The knights vowed that they would never injure or vilify each other, that they would share each other's dangers? and in sign of the perfection of love, and of true unity, and in order to possess, as much as they could, the same heart and resolves, they solemnly promised true fraternity and companionship of arms.* They then received the holy sacrament, and the priest blessed the union. It was a point rather of generous understanding than of regular convention, that they would divide equally all their acquisitions. Of this custom an instance may be given. Robert de Oily and Roger de Ivey, two young gentlemen who came into England with the duke of Normandy, were sworn brothers. Some time after the conquest, the king granted the two great honours of Oxford, and St. Waleries, to Robert de Oily, who immemediately bestowed one of them, that of St. Waleries, on his sworn brother, Roger de Ivery.†

Fraternity of arms was entered into for a specific object, or general knightly quests, for a limited term, or for life. It did not always occur, however, that the fraternity of arms was established with religious solemnities: but whatever might have been the ceremonies, the obligation was ever considered sacred; so sacred, indeed, that romance writers did not startle their readers by a tale, whose interest hangs upon the circumstance of a knight slaying his two infant children for the sake of compounding a medicine with their blood which should heal the leprosy of his brother in arms.‡

This form of attachment was the strongest tie in chivalry.

"From this day forward, ever mo
Neither fail, either for weal or wo,
To help other at need,
Brother, be now true to me,
And I shall be as true to thee."

So said Sir Amylion to Sir Amys, and it was the common language of chivalry. Friendship was carried to the romantic extremity of the Homeric age. Brethren in arms adopted all the enmities and loves of each other,

"A generous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows."

And so powerful was the obligation that it even superseded the duty of knighthood to womankind. A lady might in vain have claimed the protection of a cavalier, if he could allege that at that moment he was bound to fly to the succour of his brother in arms.

* Juv. des Ursins anno 1411. Vraye fraternité et compagnie d'armes, is the frequent expression in old writers for this chivalric union.

† Kennet's Parochial Antiquities, p. 57, cited in Henry's History of England, vol. iii., p. 360. 4to.

‡ The romance of Amys and Amylion. It is abridged by Mr. Ellis in the third volume of his Specimens of early English Metrical Romances, and inserted at length by Mr. Weber in the second volume of his collection. The reader may be amused to learn that the mother of the children was so complaisant to her husband as to approve of his having cut their little throats

"O lef lief! she said tho,
God may send us children mo!
Of them have thou no care.
And if it were at my heart's root,
For to bring thy brother boot,
My life I would not spare.
There shall no man our children sene,
For to-morrow they shall buried ben,
As they fairly dead were.
Thus that lady, fair and bright,
Comforted her lord with her might,
As ye may understand
Sin* they went both right
To Sir Amylion, that gentle knight,
That ever was fre to fonde.†
When Sir Amylion awakened though,
All his foulehead away was go
Through grace of God's Son.
Then was he as fair a man
As ever he was ere than
Since he was been inlonde."

The conclusion of the story shows the belief of the writer that heaven approved of such sacrifices to friendship.

"Then were they all blithe,
Their joy could no man kithe,
They thanked God that day.
As ye may at me liste and lythe.‡
Into the chamber they went swyte.§
Ther as the children lay.
Without wern,‖ without a wound,
All whole the children there they found,
And lay together in play.
For joy they went there, they stood
And thanked God with mild mode
Their care was all away."

* After. † That ever could be met with.
‡ Now you must listen to me.
§ Quickly. ‖ Scar.

Digitized by Google

Thus accompanied, the knight proceeded to achieve the high emprises of his noble and gallant calling. Both the principles and the objects of chivalry having been always the same, a general similarity of character existed through all the chivalric ages; and as certain moral combinations divide human nature into classes, so the knight was a distinct character, and the qualities peculiar to his order may be delineated in one picture, notwithstanding individual and national variations, which had better be described when we come to mark the degrees of the influence of chivalry in the different countries of Europe.

The courage of the knight is the part of his character which naturally calls for our first attention. It was daring and enterprising: but I cannot insist upon recklessness of danger as the quality of chivalry only, for in every nation's battles, to be the first to advance and the last to retreat have been the ambition of warriors. The knight, however, cared little for the cause or necessity of his doing battle so that he could display his valour. About the year 1370, Sir Robert Knowles marched through France, and laid waste the country as far as the very gates of the capital. A knight was in his company, who had made a vow that he would ride to the walls or gates of Paris, and strike at the barriers* with a spear. And for the finishing of his vow he departed from his company, his spear in his hand, his shield suspended from his neck, armed at all points, and mounted on a good horse, his squire followed him on another, with his helmet. When he approached Paris he put on the glittering head-piece, and leaving his squire behind him, and dashing his spurs into his steed, he rode at full career to the barriers which were then open. The French lords, who were there, weened that he would have entered the town, but that was not his mind, for when he had struck the barriers according to his vow, he turned his reign and departed. Then the knights of France immediately divined his purpose, and cried, "Go your way; you have right well acquitted yourself."*

About the same time a band of English knights advanced to the French town of Noyon, and spread their banners abroad, as a defiance to the garrison. But the French made no sally; and a Scottish knight, named Sir John Swinton, impatient of rest, departed from his company, his spear in his hand, and mounted on a *cheval de lance*, his page behind him, and in that manner approached the barriers. He then alighted, and saying to his page, "Hold, keep my horse, and depart not hence," he went to the barriers. Within the pallisades were many good knights, who had great marvel what this said knight would do. Then Swinton said to them, "Sirs, I am come hither to see you; as you will not issue out of your barriers, I will enter them, and prove my knighthood against yours. Win me if you can!" He then fought with the French cavaliers, and so skilfully, that he wounded two or three of them; the people on the walls and the tops of the houses remaining still, for they had great pleasure to regard his valiantness, and the gallant knights of France charged them not to cast any missiles against him, but to let the battle go fairly and freely forward. So long they fought that at

* It may be as well to notice that the barriers of a town, or its outer fortification, are described by Froissart as being grated pallisades, the grates being about half a foot wide.

* The remainder of this knight's story should be told, although it does not relate to the matter of the text. "In the suburbs he had a sore encounter, for, as he passed on the pavement, he found before him a bocher, a big man, who had well seen this knight pass by, and he held in his hands a sharp heavy axe, with a long point; and as the knight returned, and took no heed, this bocher came on his side and gave him such a stroke between the neck and shoulders, that he fell upon his horse, and yet he recovered; and then the bocher struck him again, so that the axe entered into his body, so that, for pain, the knight fell to the earth, and his horse ran away, and came to the squire who abode for his master at the streets; and so the squire took the horse, and had great marvel what was become of his master, for he had seen him ride to the barriers, and strike thereat with his glaive, and return again. Then he rode a little forth thitherward, and anon he saw his master laying upon the earth between four men, who were striking him as they would strike an anvil. And then the squire was so affrighted he durst not go farther, for he saw he could not help his master. Therefore he returned as fast as he might; so there the said knight was slain. And the knights that were at the gate caused him to be buried in holy ground." Lord Berners's Froissart, c. 281.

Digitized by Google

last the page went to the barriers, and said to his master, "Sir, come away; it is time for you to depart, for your company are leaving the field." The knight heard him well, and then gave two or three strokes about him, and armed as he was he leaped over the barriers, and vaulting upon his horse behind his faithful page, he waved his hand to the Frenchmen, and cried, "Adieu, Sirs, I thank you." He then urged his noble horse to speed, and rode to his own company. This goodly feat of arms was praised by many folks.*

This love of causeless perils was often accompanied by curious circumstances. On the manners of the ancestors of the heroes of chivalry it has been said,

> "In the caverns of the west,
> By Odin's fierce embrace comprest,
> A wond'rous boy shall Rinda bear.
> Who ne'er shall comb his raven hair,
> Nor wash his visage in the stream,
> Nor see the sun's departing beam,
> Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
> Flaming on the fun'ral pile!"

And king Harold made a solemn vow never to clip or comb his hair till he should have extended his sway over the whole country. Tacitus informs us, that the youthful Germans, particularly those among the Catti, did not shave the hair from the head or chin until they had achieved renown in arms. The same feelings influenced the knight of chivalry. He was wont to wear a chain on his arm or leg until he had performed some distinguishing exploit; and when his merit became conspicuous, the mark of thraldom was removed with great solemnity.† A young knight would not at first assume his family arms, but wore plain armour and shield without any device till he had won renown. He would even fight blindfold, or pinion one of his hands to his body, or in some other manner partially disable himself from performing his deed of arms. Before the gate of Troyes there was an English squire, resolved to achieve some high and romantic feat. His companions were unable to judge whether or not he could see, but with his spear in his hand, and his targe suspended from his neck, he recklessly spurred his horse to the barriers, leaped over them, and careered to the gate of the town, where the Duke of Burgundy and other great lords of France were standing. He reigned round his foaming steed and urged him back towards the camp. The duke shouted applause at his boldness: but some surrounding men-at-arms had not the same generous sympathy for noble chivalry, and they hurled their lances like javelins at the brave squire, till they brought him and his horse dead to the ground, wherewith the Duke of Burgundy was right sore displeased.* Equally singular, and more fantastic, was the conduct of certain young knights of England during the French wars of Edward III., for each of them bound up one of his eyes with a silk ribbon, and swore before the ladies and the peacock, that he would not see with both eyes until he had accomplished certain deeds of arms in France.†

Nothing appears incredible in romances after reading these tales of a very faithful historian; but we should wrong chivalry were we to suppose that this wild, this phrenetic courage was its chief character. Perhaps it was in general the quality of young soldiers only; for discretion was certainly a part of cavaleresque valour. That a knight was sage is frequently said to his honour. Not, indeed, that his skill ever degener-

* Froissart, vol. i., c. 278.

† Froissart, c. 281; Gray's Descent of Odin; Herbert's Icelandic Translations, p. 39; Scott's Minstrelsy, vol. 1, p. 45.

* Froissart, c. 384.

† Froissart, c. 28. "Et si avoit entre eux plusieurs jeunes bacheliers, qui avoient chacun un œil couvert de drap, à fin qu'ils n'en puissent veoir; et disoit on que ceux là avoient voué, entre dames de leur pais, que jamais ne verroient que d'un œil jusques à ce qu'ils auroient fait aucunes prouesses de leur corps en royaume de France." The disposition of knights to make vows was an excellent subject for Cervantes's raillery. "Tell her," continued I (Don Quixote), "when she least expects it, she will come to hear how I made an oath, as the Marquis of Mantua did, when he found his nephew Baldwin ready to expire on the mountains, never to eat upon a table-cloth, and several other particulars, which he swore to observe, till he had revenged his death. So in the like solemn manner will I swear, never to desist from traversing the habitable globe, and ranging through all the seven parts of the world, more indefatigably than ever was done by Prince Pedro of Portugal, till I have freed her from her enchantment." Don Quixote, part 2, c. 23.

Digitized by Google

ated into the subtlety of stratagem, for bold and open* battle was always preferred to the refinements of artifice, and he would have debased his order if he had profited by any mischance happening to his foe. But in the choice of ground, in the disposition of his squires and men-at-arms, he exerted his best skill, for to be adventurous was only one part of valour. The soldier in chivalry was also imaginative, a word constantly used by our old authors to show a mind full of resources, and to express military abilities.†

There was not so much ruthlessness in his heroism as distinguished those ages of the ancient world which fancy and poetry have sometimes painted as chivalrous. The prostrate and suppliant foe seldom sued for mercy in vain from the true knight. It was a maxim, that a warrior without pity was without worship.‡ Even the pride of knighthood often softened the fierce and rugged face of war, for inferior people were spared, because they were unworthy of the lance. A knight trained to warlike exercises cared little for a battle unless he could prove his skilful bearing; and what honour could he gain from slaying rude and unarmed peasantry? The simple peasant was often spared from motives of prudence. Richard Brembrow, an English knight, was ravaging Brittany, in the year 1350, but was reproached for his conduct by Beaumanoir, a partisan of the house of Blois, who was astonished that a valiant cavalier should make war, not only on men bearing arms, but on labourers and others. "In all wars guided by chivalric principles," continued the knight of Brittany, "true soldiers never injure the tillers of the ground; for if you were to do so, the world would be destroyed by famine."* More generous feelings, however, sometimes had their influence. The stern Du Guesclin, when on his death-bed, desired his old companions in arms to remember that "neither the clergy, nor women, nor children, nor poor people, were their enemies;" and the charge came with peculiar propriety from him, for his past life could furnish no instance of needless severity.

To show the reverse of such mildness was the unhappy fate of the Black Prince, who, by his massacre of three thousand people at Limoges,† tarnished the lustre of all his former glories. The narrative of this affair which Froissart has left us, shows that such barbarities were not so frequent in chivalric times as modern hatred of aristocratical power has represented. We may learn from our historian that the massacre at Limoges proceeded from the unhappy disposition to cruelty which at that time clouded the mind of the Prince of Wales, and not from the general principles of chivalry: for he tells us, that the knights prepared themselves to do evil, to slay men, women, and children, because they were so commanded; and he whose heart leaped for joy in describing a manly conflict, where banners and standards waved in the wind, with horses barded, and knights and squires richly armed, yet sighs over the massacre of Limoges, and says it was "great pity" to see the slaughter.‡ It was only when cities

* Every true knight said like him in the Morte d'Arthur, "Though the knight be never so false, I will never slay him sleeping; for I will never destroy the high order of knighthood." And again, "Well, I can deem that I shall give him a fall. For it is no mastery; for my horse and I be both fresh, and so are not his horse and he, and weet ye well that he will take it for great unkindness, for every one good is loth to take another at disadvantage."

† The true son of chivalry was like Banquo, of whom Macbeth says,

"'Tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety."

Sir Philip Sidney excellently well describes the nature of chivalric courage. "Their courage was guided with skill, and their skill was armed with courage; neither did their hardiness darken their wit, nor their wit cool their hardiness: both valiant as men despising death, and both confident as unwonted to be overcome. Their feet steady, their hands diligent, their eyes watchful, and their hearts resolute." Arcadia, p. 28. Edit. 1590.

‡ Morte d'Arthur, 1. 7.

* Argentré Histoire de la Bretagne, p. 391.

† Limoges had revolted on account of a tax which had been imposed upon the English dominions in France, to pay the expenses of the war, which had had for its object the restoration of Peter the Cruel.

‡ Froissart, liv. 1, c. 283. "Then the Prince, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Cambridge, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Guiscard Dangle, and all the others, with their companies, entered into

Digitized by Google

that belonged to the enemies of the church were taken, that the sword of the victorious Christian was imbrued in blood to the very hilt; for Pagans, Saracens, Jews, and heretics were not considered within the pale of the humane courtesies of chivalry.

Frequent pauses were made in the single encounters of knighthood, for generousness was thought an essential part of bravery, and the soldier would rather vanquish by his skill than by any accidental advantage. A giant of the first enormity requested of his antagonist, Sir Guy of Warwick, a momentary respite for the purpose of slacking his thirst in a neighbouring stream. The noble knight assented to this request, and the giant, perfectly recovered from his fatigue, renewed the combat with fresh vigour. Sir Guy, in his turn, was oppressed by heat and fatigue, and requested a similar favour; but the uncourteous giant refused.* In a battle between the celebrated Roland and a Saracen knight, named Sir Otuel, a stroke of the former's sword cut into the brain of his antagonist's horse. The paladin of Charlemagne, with true chivalric courtesy, reigned in his steed, and rested on his arms till Sir Otuel had disengaged himself from the equipments of his horse. The Saracen rallied him for want of skill in missing his gigantic frame; but on the renewal of the battle Otuel was guilty of a similar awkwardness, and conscious that his raillery might now be retorted with double force, he imitated the knightly courtesy of Roland, and waited till his foe was completely free from his fallen steed.* The preliminaries of a battle between the famous Oliver and a Saracen cavalier, hight Sir Ferumbras, was still more courteous, for the Christian knight assisted his foe to lace his helmet, and before they encountered, the combatants politely bowed to each other.†

Veracious chroniclers confirm the stories of romance writers. In a battle of honour between the English and French, when it was thought contrary to chivalry for either party to be more numerous than the other, the knights contended for several hours with intervals of repose. When any two of them had fought so long as to be fatigued, they fairly and easily departed, and set themselves down by the side of a stream, and took off their helmets. On being refreshed they donned their armour, and returned to the fight.‡

We commonly refer to the principles of honour in chivalry to account for the interesting fact, that a victorious knight permitted his prisoner to go to his own country or town, in order to fetch his ransom; and we know that his word of honour was considered a sufficient pledge for his return at the appointed season. The true reason of this general practice

the city, and all other footmen ready apparelled, to do evil, and to pillage and rob the city, and to slay men, women, and children; for so it was commanded them to do. It was a great pity to see the men, women, and children that kneeled down on their knees to the Prince for mercy, but he was so inflamed with ire, that he took no heed to them, so that none was heard; but all put to death as they were met withal, and such as were nothing culpable. There was no pity taken of the poor people who wrought never no manner of treason; yet they bought it dearer than the great personages, such as had done the evil and trespass. There was not so hard a heart within the city of Limoges, and if he had any remembrance of God, but that wept piteously for the great mischief that they saw before their eyes: for more than three thousand men, women and children were slain that day. God have mercy on their souls, for I trow they were martyrs." Lord Berners's Translation.

* Romance of Guy of Warwick.

* Romance of Sir Otuel. And in the Morte d'Arthur it is said, "and thus by assent of them both, they granted either other to rest, and so they set them down upon two mole hills there beside the fighting place, and either of them unlaced his helmet, and took the cold wind, for either of their pages was fast by them to come when they called to lace their harness, and to set them on again at their commandment. Morte d'Arthur, lib. 8, c. 17.

† Romance of Sir Ferumbras.

‡ Froissart, liv. 2, c. 24. This story of Froissart reminds one of Mortimer,

"When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with the great Glendower:
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Blood-stain'd with these valiant combatants."

Henry IV. Part 1, Act 1, Sc. iii.

Digitized by Google

of chivalry may be learned from a passage in Froissart. After describing a battle between the English and French in the year 1344, he says, that the English dealt like good companions with their prisoners; and suffered many to depart on their oaths and promises to return again at a certain day to Bergerac or to Bourdeaux.* The Scots were equally courteous to the English after the truly chivalric battle of Otterbourn. They set them to their ransom, and every man said to his prisoner, "Sir, go and unarm yourself, and take your ease;" and so made their prisoners as good cheer as if they had been brethren, without doing them any injury.† A short while after the battle Sir Matthew Redman yielded himself prisoner to Sir James Lindsay, rescue, or no rescue, so that he dealt with him like a good companion.‡ It was, therefore, because all the knights of Europe were united in one universal bond of brotherhood, that one knight showed courtesy to another. It was the principle of fraternity which the Christian religion inculcates, that created all the kindly consideration in war which distinguished chivalry; and base and barbarous as we may choose to call our ancestors, I know not whether the principles of Christian friendship were not as well understood in their days as in our own age of boasted light and improvement. There is truth as well as beauty in Froissart's observation, that "nobleness and gentleness ought to be aided by nobles and gentles." Not only were prisoners released on their parole of honour, but their ransom was never set so high that they could not pay it at their ease, and still maintain their degree.§

One curious particular, illustrative of knightly dignity, remains to be mentioned. It was beneath the bearing of chivalry for a cavalier to surrender himself prisoner to one of the raskall rout, and if he ever was reduced to such a sad necessity he would amuse his pride by raising his conqueror to the rank of chivalry. The Earl of Suffolk, during our wars in France. was taken prisoner by William Renaud; but he would not surrender to him until he had given him the accolade, bound a sword round him, and thus dignified him with knighthood. But there was no loss of chivalric dignity in a knight being taken prisoner by a squire, for a squire, though inferior in rank, was of the same quality as a knight. The renowned Du Guesclin, whom I so often mention as a pattern of chivalry, yielded to the prowess of a squire of England who fought under the standard of Sir John Chandos.

In the course of the fourteenth century the Duke of Gueldres was taken prisoner by a squire named Arnold, and was removed to a castle, where he promised to pay his ransom. The lords of Prussia, hearing that the duke had been captured in his course to their country, summoned a mighty force and marched to the place of the duke's confinement. The squire dreaded their power, and resolved to quit the castle: but before his departure he went to the Duke of Gueldres, and said to him, "Sir duke, you are my prisoner, and I am your master: you are a gentleman and a true knight; you have sworn and given me your faith, and whithersoever I go you ought to follow me. I cannot tell if you have sent for the great master of Prussia or not, but he is coming hither with a mighty power. I shall not remain: you may tarry if you list, and I will take with me your faith and promise." Gueldres made no answer. The squire soon afterwards mounted horse and departed, telling the Duke that he would always find him at such a place, naming a strong castle, in a remote situation. The Prussians soon arrived and liberated their friend: but he resolved to perform his promise to the squire whom he called his master, and neither absolution, nor dispensation, nor argument, nor raillery, could induce him to break his faith. His friends and relations then treated with the squire for his freedom, and by paying the customary ransom the Duke of Gueldres recovered that honourable liberty of mind which above all things was dear to the true knight.*

Certainly the virtues of a knight were not necessarily patriotic. They were rather calculated to weaken than to strengthen his tendencies to king and country. Al-

* Froissart, liv. 1, c. 107.
† Ibid., liv. 2, c. 145.
‡ Ibid., liv. 2, c. 146.
§ Froissart. liv. 1, c. 149, 233.

* Froissart, liv. 1, c. 235, 371, liv. 2, c. 152.

Digitized by Google

though as an individual he was bound to his native land, yet the character of his knighthood was perpetually pressing him to a course of conduct distinct from all national objects. He was the judge of right and wrong;* he referred to no external standard of equity; he was an independent agent. These qualities of chivalry gave birth to the knight errantry, that singular feature in the character of the middle ages.

"Long so they travell'd through wasteful ways,
Where dangers dwelt and perils most did wonne,
To hunt for glory and renowned praise:
Full many countries they did overrun,
From the uprising to the setting sun,
And many hard adventures did atchieve;
Of all the which they honour ever wonne,
Seeking the weak oppressed to relieve,
And to recover right for such as wrong did grieve."†

It was considered the first praise of knighthood to efface foul outrage, and the advantages arising to society from this disposition are confessed even by satirists,

——————— "Knyghtes shoulde
Ryden and rappe adoune in remes aboute,
And to take trespassours and tye them faste.
* * * * *
Truly to take, and truly to fight,
Is the profession and the pure order that apendeth to knights."‡

The happy consequences to woman of this chivalric principle, and its tendencies to ameliorate manners, will best be seen in our delineation of the character of dames and damsels in the middle ages. With respect to the general interests of society it may be observed, that knight errantry was a very considerable means of correcting the state of violence and misrule in feudal times. The monks of St. Albans held a body of knights in pay who defended the abbey and preserved the roads free from robbers, whether of the baronial or the vulgar class.* Until the discipline of laws had tamed the world into order, force was the only measure of power; and it was by the sword alone that injuries committed by the sword could be avenged. The protection of the wronged being a great principle of chivalry, no oppressed person was at a loss for a mode of redress. Some gentle knight was ever to be found who would lay his lance in its rest to chastise the evil doer. While Edward the First was travelling in France, he heard that a lord of Burgundy was continually committing outrages on the persons and property of his neighbours. In the true spirit of chivalry Edward attacked the castle of this uncourteous baron. His prowess asserted the cause of justice; and he bestowed the domains which he had won upon a nobler and more deserving lord.†

When he was neither engaged in his country's wars, nor errant in quest of adventures, the knight fought among the chivalry of foreign princes. This was a matter of daily occurrence; the English knights obtaining licences from the king on their pledging the honour of their chivalry not to disclose the secrets of the court, nor to fight on the side of the nation's enemies. It is curious to observe that the service of France was always preferred by the English adventurers to that of Spain or Portugal. France, they said, was a good, sweet country, and temperate, possessing pleasant towns and fair rivers, but Castile was full of barren rocks and mountains, the air was unwholesome, the waters were troubled, and the people were poor and evil arrayed. The wines of Spain formed, however, the principal grievance. The English complained that they were so strong and fiery as to corrupt their heads, dry their bowels, and consume their very livers; and with what hot suns and hot wines Englishmen, who in their own country were sweetly nourished, were in Castile burnt without and within. There is another passage of Froissart which I shall lay before the reader in the

* Thus Don Quixote pleasantly says in his enumeration of chivalric qualities, "whoever possesses the science of knight errantry ought to be learned in the laws, and understand distributive and commutative justice, in order to right all mankind."

† Fairy Queen, book iii., canto 1, st. 3; and Tasso, with equal attention to truth, thus describes the duty of a knight.

Premer gli alteri, e sollevar gli imbelli,
Defender gli innocenti, e punir gli empi,
Fian l'arti lor.
La Ger., lib. 10, 76.

‡ Piers Ploughman, first vision.

* M. Paris, 45.

† Matthew of Westminster, p. 353.

Digitized by Google

right genuine and expressive old English of John Bourchier, knight, Lord Berners. "The Englishmen ate grapes (in Spain) when they might get them, and drank of the hot wines, and the more they drank the more they were set on fire, and thereby burnt their livers and lungs; for that diet was contrary to their nature. Englishmen are nourished with good meats and with ale, which keep their bodies in temper. In Spain the nights were hot because of the great heat of the day, and the mornings marvellously cold, which deceives them; for in the night they could suffer nothing on them, and so slept all naked, and in the morning cold took them ere they were aware, and that cast them into fevers and fluxes without remedy, and as well died great men as mean people.*

All this adventurousness proceeded from the principle, that the life of a knight was not to be regarded as a course of personal indulgence. His virtues were of an active, stirring nature, and he was not permitted to waste his days in dark obscurity, or to revel in ease. Like falcons that disdained confinement, he could not remain long at rest without wishing to roam abroad. "Why do we not array ourselves and go and see the bounds and ports of Normandy?" were the words of war by which our English knights and squires would rouse one another to arms. "There be knights and squires to awake us and to fight with us."† And Honour was always the quest of the true knight.

"In wood, in waves, in wars she wont to dwell,
And will be found with peril and with pain;
Nor can the man that moulders in idle cell,
Unto her happy mansion attain.
Before her gate high God did sweat ordain,
And wakeful watchers ever to abide:
But easy is the way and passage plain
To pleasure's palace: it may soon be spide,
And day and night her doors to all stand open wide."‡

It has often been supposed§ that the chivalric array must have been inconvenient to the feudal and national disposition of armies, and that knightly honours would be continually striving with other distinctions for pre-eminence. But this supposition has arisen from a want of attention to chivalric principles. Chivalry was not opposed to national institutions; it was a feeling of honour that pervaded without disturbing society; and knightly distinctions were altogether independent of ranks in the state. As every lord was educated in chivalry, he was of course a knight; but he led his troops into the field in consequence of his feudal possessions; and any that were attached to his knighthood, it would be in vain to inquire after. The array of an army was always formed agreeably to the sageness and imagination of the constable, or marshal, or whatever other officer of the nation was commander, without the slightest reference to chivalry. A squire frequently led knights, certainly not on account of his chivalric title, but by reason of favour or merit, or any other of the infinity of causes that occasion advancement.

The religion of the knight was generally the religion of the time; and it would be idle to expect to see religious reformers start from the bands of an unlettered soldiery, whose swords had been consecrated by the church. The warrior said many orisons every day; besides a nocturne of the Psalter, matins of our Lady, of the Holy Ghost, and of the cross, and also the dirige.* The service of the mass was usually performed by both armies in the presence of each other before a battle; and no warrior would fight without secretly breathing a prayer to God or a favourite saint. Brevity was an important feature in a soldier's devotion, as the following anec-

* Froissart, 1, c. 361; 2, 124, 202, 203.

† Froissart, 1, 46.

‡ Fairy Queen, book ii., canto c., st. 41.

§ Even so judicious a writer as Mr. Dunlop, says (Hist. of Fiction, vol. ii., p. 144), that vigour of discipline was broken by want of unity of command. St. Palaye, in whom want of acquaintance with the subject is less excusable, says, "Si le pouvoir absolu si l'unité du commandement est le seul moyen d'entretenir la vigueur de la discipline, jamais elle ne dut être moins solidement établie, et plus souvent ébranlée que du temps de nos chevaliers. Quelle confusion, en effet, ne devoient point apporter tant d'especes de chefs, dont les principes, les motifs et les interêts n'etoient pas toujours d'accord, et qui ne tiroient point d'une même source le droit de se faire obeir?" Memoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie, partie 5.

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 26.

Digitized by Google

dote proves. When the French cavalier, Lahire, had just reached his army, he met a chaplain, from whom he demanded absolution. The priest required him to confess his sins. But the knight answered he had not time, for he wanted immediately to attack the enemy. He added, that a minute disclosure of his offences was not necessary, for he had only been guilty of sins common to cavaliers, and the chaplain well knew what those sins were. The priest thereupon absolved him, and Lahire raised his hands to heaven, and exclaimed, "God, I pray thee that thou wouldest do to-day for Lahire as much as thou wouldest Lahire should do for thee, if he were God and thou wert Lahire." He then dashed spurs into his horse, and his falchion was stained with foeman's blood before the good chaplain had recovered from his astonishment at this singular form of prayer. The union of religion and arms was displayed in a very remarkable manner at a joust which was held at Berwick, in the year 1338. The lance of an English knight pierced the helmet of his Scottish opponent, William de Ramsey, and nailed it to his head. It being instantly perceived that the wound was mortal, a priest was hastily sent for. The knight was shriven in his helm, and soon afterwards died, and the good Earl of Derby, who was present, was so much delighted at the religious and chivalric mode of the Scotsman's death, that he hoped God of his grace would vouchsafe to send him a similar end.*

The knight visited sacred places, and adopted all the superstitions, whether mild or terrible, and the full spirit of intolerant fierceness, of his time. The defence of the church formed part of his obligation.

"Chevaliers en ce monde cy
Ne peuvent vivre sans soucy :
Ils doivent le peuple défendre,
Et leur sang pour la foi espandre."

* "Then said the gud Earl of Derby,
Lo! here a fair sight sykkyrly.
A fairer sight how may man see,
Than knight or squire which ever he be,
In-til his helm him thus got schryive?
When I shall pass out of this life,
I would God of his grace would send
To me a like manner to end."
Wyntown's Cronykil of Scotland, book viii., c. 35.

The knight knew no other argument than the sword to gainsay the infidel, and he was ready at all times to "thrust it into the belly of a heretic as far as it would go." This was the feeling in all chivalric times; but St. Louis was the knight who had the merit of arraying it in the form of a maxim.

The wars of these soldiers of the church were not purely defensive. The cavalier fought openly and offensively against heretics. This was part of the spirit and essence of his character, encouraged by the crusades, and the principles of the military orders; and thus no knight's military reputation was perfect, unless it was adorned with laurels which had been won in Heathennesse as well as in Christendom; for it was the general opinion, that, as Heaven had chosen learned clerks to maintain the holy Catholic faith with Scripture and reason against the miscreants and unbelievers, so knights had also been chosen, in order that the miscreants might be vanquished by force of arms.*

The highest possible degree of virtue was required of a knight: it was a maxim in chivalry, that he who ordained another a knight must be virtuous himself; for it was argued if the knight who made a knight were not virtuous, how could he give that which he had not; and no man could be a true son of chivalry unless he were of unsullied life.† He was not only to be virtuous, but without reproach; for he considered his honourable fame as a polished mirror, whose beauty may be lost by an impure breath and an unwholesome air, as well as by being broken into pieces. But there was nothing so abstract and refined in the nature of knightly virtue as has been generally thought. It was the duty of the cavalier to peril himself in the cause of the afflicted and of the church; and his exertions and endeavours to perform the conditions of his oath of chivalry were to be rewarded, not by the mere gratification of any metaphysical fancies, but by the hope of joy in heaven. This was the leading principle of his duty, however often it might be abused or forgotten; and this was the feeling which his oath taught him to encourage. But

* Caxton Fayt of Armes and Chevalrie, fol. 40.

† Ibid., c. 48.

Digitized by Google

it did not exclude from the conduct the operation of personal motives. Thus, in displaying his love of justice, he displayed his chivalric skill; and by the same action he gratified his laudable aspirations for fame, and soothed and satisfied his conscience.

Certes all knights were not religious, even in the sense in which religion was understood in chivalric times. One cavalier made it his heart's boast that he had burnt a church, with twenty-four monks, its contents.* The joyousness of youth often broke out in witty sentences, and the sallies of the buoyant spirits of the young cavalier were neither descent nor moral. When the imagination was inflamed by chivalry and love, he forgot his rosary, and said that paradise was only the habitation of dirty monks, priests, and hermits; and that, for his own part, he preferred the thoughts of going to the devil; and, in his fiery kingdom, he was sure of the society of kings, knights, squires, minstrels, and jugglers, and above all the rest, the mistress of his heart.†

Of his moral virtues perfect fidelity to a promise was very conspicuous, for his nobleness disdained any compromise with convenience or circumstances. However absurd the vow, still he was compelled to perform it in all the strictness of the letter. Notwithstanding the obvious inconveniences of such a course, a man frequently promised to grant whatever another should ask; and he would have lost the honour of his knighthood, if he had declined from his word when the wish of him to whom the promise had been made was stated. Sir Charles du Blois promised Sir Loyes of Spain whatever gift he might require for the service he had rendered him. "Then," said Sir Loyes, "I require you to cause the two knights that are in prison in Favet to be brought hither, and give them to me to do with them at my pleasure, for they have injured me, and slain my nephew. I will strike their heads off before the town, in sight of their companions." Sir Charles was obliged to comply and deliver up the knights; only remonstrating with Sir Loyes on the cruelty of putting two such valiant knights to death, and on the impolicy of such a measure, as giving occasion to their enemies of dealing in a similar manner with them when the fortune of war changed her face.*

There was a generousness about chivalry unknown to other warfare. If in these days of improved jurisprudence we revert our eyes with horror and contempt to times when every question was decided by the sword, still an air of graceful courtesy hung over them, which charms the imagination. A cavalier always granted safe-conduct through his territories to all who required it, even to those who asserted pretensions, which, if established, would deprive him of his

* Malmsbury, p. 186.

† Lai of Aucassin and Nicolette.

* Froissart, livre 1, c. 87. The romances of chivalry are full of tales expressive of this feature of the knightly character. As amusing a story as any is to be found in the Morte d'Arthur. "There came into the court a lady that hight the lady of the lake. And she came on horseback, richly bysede, and saluted King Arthur, and asked him a gift that he promised her when she gave him the sword. 'That is sooth,' said Arthur, 'a gift I promised you. Ask what ye will, and ye shall have it, an it be in my power to give it.'—'Well,' said the lady, 'I ask the head of the knight that hath wore the sword, or the damsel's head that brought it. I take no force though I have both their heads, for he slew my brother, a good knight and a true, and that gentlewoman was causer of my father's death.'—'Truly,' said King Arthur, 'I may not grant either of their heads with my worship, therefore ask what ye will else, and I shall fulfil your desire.'—'I will ask none other thing,' said the lady. When Balyn was ready to depart, he saw the lady of the lake, that by her means had slain Balyn's mother, and he had sought her three years; and when it was told him that she asked his head of King Arthur, he went to her streyte, and said, 'Evil be you found, you would have my head, and therefore shall lose yours,' and with his sword lightly he smote off her head before King Arthur. 'Alas! for shame,' said Arthur, why have you done so? you have ashamed me and all my court; for this was a lady that I was beholden to, and hither she came under my safe-conduct. I shall never forgive you that trespass.'—'Sir,' said Balyn, 'me forthinketh of your displeasure; for this same lady was the untruest lady living, and by enchantment and sorcery she hath been the destroyer of many good knights, and she was causer that my mother was burnt through her falsehood and treachery.'—'What cause soever ye had,' said Arthur, 'you should have forborne her in my presence; therefore, think not the contrary, you shall repent it, for such another despite had I never in my court, therefore withdraw you out of my court in all haste that you may.'" Morte d'Arthur, lib. ii., c. 3.

Digitized by Google

possessions. When Matilda landed near Arundel, to contend for the throne of England, Stephen gave her honourable conduct to the castle of his brother, the Earl of Gloucester.* This instance of chivalric generousness seems scarcely creditable to those who view ancient times by the light of modern prejudices. It was not the passive virtue that declined to profit by any mischance happening to an adversary, but it was one knight drawing the sword, and placing it in the hands of his foe.

More full in its circumstances, and equally romantic in its character, is the following tale. About the year 1338, Sir Peter Courtenay, an English knight of approved valiancy, went to France in order to joust with the renowned Sir Guy of Tremouille. They ran one course with spears, and the king then stopped the martial game, saying that each had done enough. He made the stranger knight fair presents, and set him on his way to Calais, under the care of the Lord of Clary, who is characterized by our old chivalric chronicler as a lusty and frisky knight. They rode together till they reached Lucen, where resided the Countess of St. Poule, sister of the King of England, and whose first husband had been a Lord of Courtenay. During the noble entertainment with which she greeted her guests, the Countess inquired of Sir Peter his opinion of France. He complimented the country in most of its forms, and praised the demeanour of the French chivalry, except in one thing, for he complained that none of their knights would do any deed of arms with him, although he had with great trouble and cost left England to encounter them. The Lord of Clary heard with pain the knights of his country reviled, in the presence of the sister of the King of England; but he restrained his feelings because Sir Peter was then under his protection.

The next day they took their leave of the Countess, who, like a noble lady, threw a chain of gold round the neck of each. They proceeded to Calais, and when they reached the frontier, and Sir Peter stepped on the English territory, the Lord of Clary reminded him of the language he had used at the board of the Countess St. Poule, regarding the French chivalry, and added, that such an opinion was not courteous nor honourable, and that simple knight as he was he would do his devoir to answer him, saying, however, that he was influenced not by any hatred to his person, but the desire of maintaining the honour of French knighthood.

Accordingly they jousted in the marshes of Calais, in the presence of noble cavaliers and squires of the two nations. In the second course the lance of Lord Clary pierced the shoulder of Sir Peter, and the wounded knight was led to the neighbouring town. The Lord of Clary returned to Paris, proud that he had vindicated the chivalric honour of his country, and expecting praise. But when it was reported that a strange knight travelling under the royal safeguard, had been required to do a deed of arms, the king and his council felt alarmed, lest the honour of their nation had received a stain. It was also thought that the joust had been intentionally a mortal one, a matter which aggravated the offence. The Lord of Clary was summoned before them, and interrogated how he had presumed to be so outrageous, as to hold a joust to the utterance with a knight-stranger that had come to the king's court for good love and to exalt his honour, to do feats of arms, and had departed thence with good love and joy, and to the intent that he should not be troubled in his return, he had been delivered to his charge.

The Lord of Clary, in reply, simply related his tale, and instead of deprecating the anger of his liege lord, he claimed reward for his vindication of the French chivalry. He said he would abide the judgment of the constable and the high marshal of France, the knights and squires of honour in every land; and so highly did he esteem the chivalry of that noble knight himself, Sir Peter Courtenay, that he would appeal to his voice and discretion.

Notwithstanding this defence, the Lord of Clary was committed to prison, nor was he delivered thence till after a long time, when the entreaties of the Countess of St. Poule, the Lord of Bourbon, the Lord of Coucy, and other no-

* Malmsbury, p. 184. Quem culibet, quamvis infestissimo inimico negare, laudabilium militum mos non est.

Digitized by Google

bles, prevailed with the king. He was dismissed with this reproof and exhortation: "Sir of Clary, you supposed that you had done right well, howbeit you acted shamefuly, when you offered to do arms with Sir Peter Courtenay, who was under the king's safeguard, and delivered to you to conduct to Calais. You did a great outrage when you renewed the words, which were spoken only in sport before the Countess of St. Poule. Before you had so renewed them, you ought to have returned to the king, and then what counsel the king had given, you should have followed; because you did not this, you have suffered pain. Beware better another time, and thank the Lord of Bourbon and the Lord of Coucy for your deliverance, for they earnestly solicited for you, and also thank the Lady of St. Poule."*

The virtue of liberality seems to have been a striking feature of the chivalric character. It proceeded from that loftiness of spirit which felt that avarice would have debased a heroism that should contend for crowns and kingdoms. The minstrels of the times, who kept alive the flame of chivalry, encouraged this virtue above all others, for upon it depended their own subsistence. But it often sprang from better motives than pride or vanity. The good Lord de Foix gave every day five florins, in small money, at his gate, to poor folks, for the love of God; and he was liberal and courteous in his gifts to others; for he had certain coffers in his chambers, out of which he would oft-times take money to give to lords, knights, and squires, such as came to him, and none departed from him without a gift.† A knight, indeed, was taught to consider nothing his own, save his horse and arms, which he ought to keep as his means of acquiring honour, by using them in the defence of his religion and country, and of those who were unable to defend themselves.‡

The valiancy of chivalry was beautifully chastened by humility:

"And of his port as meek as is a maid.

Every hero, as well as Chaucer's knight, demeaned himself in all things as if he had been in the hands of God, and in his name used his arms, without vaunting or praising himself; for praise was regarded as blame in the mouth of him who commended his own actions. It was thought that if the squire had vainglory of his arms, he was not worthy to be a knight, for vainglory was a vice which destroyed the merits and the claims of chivalry.

The heroes of the Round Table were the mirror of all Christian knights; and the generous modesty of Sir Lancelot was reflected in the conduct of many a true soldier of chivalry. In the lofty fancies of romantic Europe that valiant friend of Arthur was the prowest of all the heroes of Britain; yet he always gave place to Sir Tristram, and often retired from the field of tournament when that noble son of arms was performing his devoir. Even when he was entitled to the prize, Sir Lancelot would not receive it, maugre the offering of king, queen, and knights; but when the cry was great through the field, "Sir Lancelot hath won the field, this day!" that noble subject of praise cried, on the contrary, "Sir Tristram hath won the field; for he began first, and endured last, and so hath he done the first day, the second, and the third day."*

The catalogue of knightly virtues is not yet complete; and nothing can be more beautiful to the moral eye than some of the characteristics of the ancient chivalry. Kindness and gentleness of manner, which, when adopted by kings from knightly customs, were called courtesy, were peculiar to the soldier of the middle ages, and pleasingly distinguished him from the savage sternness of other warriors, whether Roman or barbarian. Courtesy was the appearance, in the ordinary circumstances of life, of that principle of protection which, in weightier matters, made the sword leap from its scabbard; and, like every other blessing of modern times, it had its origin in the Christian religion. The world thought that courtesy and chivalry accorded together, and that villanous and foul words were contrary to an order which was

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 162.

† Froissart, ii. 26.

‡ This was part of the exhortation of a king of Portugal, on knighting his son, according to a Portuguese historian, cited in Lord Lyttleton's History of Henry II., vol. ii., p. 233, 4to.

* Morte d'Arthur; first book of Sir Tristram, c. 34.

Digitized by Google

founded on piety.* Whether historians or fabulists speak of a true knight, he is always called gentle and courteous. To be debonnaire was as necessary as to be bold;

> "Preux chevalier n'en doutez pas,
> Doit ferir hault et parler bas."†

The following anecdote curiously marks the manners of chivalric ages with relation to the quality of courtesy:—The wife and sister of Du Guesclin were once living in a castle which was attacked and taken by a force of Normans and Englishmen. The success was great and important; but public indignation was excited against the invaders, because they had transgressed the licence of war, and been guilty of the uncourteous action of surprising and disturbing ladies while they were asleep.‡

These military and moral qualities of knighthood were sustained and nourished by all the circumstances of chivalric life, even those of a peaceful nature. Hunting and falconry, the amusements of the cavalier, were images of war, and he threw over them a grace beyond the power of a mere baronial rank. Dames and maidens accompanied him to the sport of hawking, when the merry bugles sounded to field; and it was the pleasing care of every gallant knight to attend on his damsel, and on her bird which was so gallantly bedight; to let the falcon loose at the proper moment, to imitate it by his cries, to take from its talons the prey it had seized, to return with it triumphantly to his lady, and, placing the hood on its eyes, to set it again on her hand. Every true knight could say, like the cavalier in Spenser,

> "Ne is there hawk which mantleth her on perch,
> Whether high towering or accosting low,
> But I the measure of her flight do search,
> And all her prey and all her diet know."

These amusements of every-day life were always mingling themselves with the humanities of war. Edward III., when in France, in the year 1359, was attended by sixty couple of dogs, and by thirty falconers, on horseback, carrying birds. Various barons in the army had their dogs and birds with them, like the king. During the reign of Richard II., when the Duke of Lancaster was in France and Spain, many ladies accompanied the army, for the objects of the expedition were not altogether military; pleasure was as much the occupation as affairs of moment, and for the space of a month or more the Duke lay at Cologne, and removed not, except it were hunting or hawking; for the Duke and other lords of England had brought with them hawks and hounds for their own sport, and sparrow-hawks for the ladies.*

To play the game of chess, to hear the minstrel's lays, and read romances, were the principal amusements of the knight when the season and the weather did not permit hawking and hunting. A true knight was a chess-player, and the game was played in every country of chivalry; for as the chivalric states of midland Europe obtained a knowledge of it from

* Caxton, c. 66.

† The necessity of courtesy of manner was so important in the minds of the old poets that they ascribed it not only to every favourite hero, but even to animals, whether real or imaginary, Our moral poet Gower thus gravely sets forth the politeness of a dragon.

> "With all the cheer that he may,
> Toward the bed there as she lay,
> Till he came to her the beddes side,
> And she lay still and nothing cried;
> For he did all his things fair,
> And was courteous and debonair."
> Confessio Amantis, lib. 6, fol. 138.

‡ Extrait de l'Histoire de Du Gueslin, par P. H. Du Chastelet, p. 39, &c.

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 47. It is difficult to fancy the extravagant degree of estimation in which hawks were held during the chivalric ages. As Mr. Rose says in one of his notes to the Romance of Partenopex of Blois, they were considered as symbols of high estate, and as such were constantly carried about by the nobility of both sexes. Barclay, in his translation from Brandt, complains of the indecent usage of bringing them into places appropriated to public worship; a practice which, in the case of some individuals, appears to have been recognised as a right. The treasurer of the church of Auxerre enjoyed the distinction of assisting at divine service on solemn days, with a falcon on his fist; and the lord of Sassai held the privilege of perching his upon the altar. Nothing was thought more dishonourable to a man of rank, than to give up his hawks, and if he were taken prisoner, he would not resign them even as the price of liberty.

Digitized by Google

the Scandinavians, so the southern states acquired it from the Arabs.

> "When they had dined, as I you say,
> Lords and ladies went to play;
> Some to tables, and some to chess,
> With other games more and less."*

The fondness of our ancestors for the game of chess appears by the frequent mention of the amusement in the ancient romances. Sometimes a lover procured admittance to the place where his mistress was confined, by permitting the jailor to win from him a game at chess. Again, the minstrels in the baronial hall spread over their subject all the riches of their imagination. They were wont to fancy the enchanted castle of a beautiful fairy, who challenged a noble knight to play with her at chess. Flags of white and black marble formed the chequer, and the pieces consisted of massive statues of gold and silver, which moved at the touch of a magic wand held by the player. Such fables show the state of manners: but a curious story remains on historical record, which displays the practical consequences of chess-playing. During part of the reign of our Edward III. the town and castle of Evreux were French. A noble knight of the neighbourhood, named Sir William Graville, who was secretly attached to the English side, thought he could win the place, and he formed his scheme on his knowledge of the governor's character. He first gained some friends among the burgesses, who were not very strongly attached to the French cause. As he had not declared himself the friend of either party, he was permitted to walk in whatever quarters of the city he chose, and one day he loitered before the gate of the castle till he attracted the attention of the governor. They saluted each other, and conversed awhile on the topics of the season. Sir William found his auditor credulous to every tale, till, when he had told one of wondrous improbability, the governor demanded his authority. "Sir," replied the knight of Graville, "a cavalier of Flanders wrote this to me on the pledge of his honour, and sent with the letter the goodliest chess-men I ever saw."

The governor dropped all care for the story at the mention of chess-men, and he anxiously desired to see them.

"I will send for them," said Sir William, "on condition that you will play a game with me for the wine."

The governor assented, and Sir William desired his squire to fetch the chess-men and bring them to the gate.

The two knights then passed through two wickets into the castle yard; and while the stranger was viewing the edifice, his faithful squire ran at speed to the burgesses' houses, and summoned them to arms. They soon donned their harness and repaired with him to the castle gate, where, agreeably to a concerted scheme, he sounded a horn.

When Sir William heard it, he said to the governor, "Let us go out of the second gate, for the chess-men are arrived." Sir William passed the wicket, and remained without. In following him the governor stooped and put out his head. Sir William drew a small battle-axe from under his cloak, and therewith smote to death his defenceless foe. He then opened the first gate, the burgesses entered in numerous and gallant array, and incontinently the castle was taken.*

The minstrel's lay, the poetry of the troubadour, the romance of the learned clerk, all spoke of war and love, of the duties and sports of chivalry. Every baronial knight had his gay troop of minstrels that accompanied him to the field, and afterwards chanted in his hall, whether in their own or another's verse, the martial deeds which had renowned his house. A branch of the minstrelsy art consisted of reciting tales; and such persons as practised it were called jesters.

> "I warn you first at the beginning,
> That I will make no vain carping
> Of deeds of arms nor of amours
> As do minstrelles and jestours,
> That make carping in many a place
> Of Octoviane and Isembrase,
> And of many other jestes,
> And namely when they come to festes;
> Nor of the life of Bevis of Hampton,
> That was a knight of great renown;
> Nor of Sir Guy of Warwick,
> All if it might some men like."†

* Romance of Ipomydon.

* Froissart, vol. i., c. 177; and Sir Walter Scott's note to the Romance of Sir Tristrem, p. 274.

† This statement of the objects of the minstrelsy art, is taken from a manuscript cited by

Digitized by Google

Minstrels played on various musical instruments during dinner, and chanted or recited their verses and tales afterwards both in the hall and in the chamber to which the barons and knights retired for amusement.

"Before the king he set him down,
And took his harp of merry soun,
And, as he full well can,
Many merry notes he began.
The kind beheld, and sat full still,
To hear his harping he had good will.
When he left off his harping,
To him said that rich king,
Minstrel, me liketh well thy glee,
What thing that thou ask of me
Largely I will thee pay;
Therefore ask now and asay."*

A minstrel's lay generally accompanied the wine and spices which concluded the entertainment.† Kings and queens had their trains of songsters, and partly from humour and partly from contempt, the head of the band was called king of the minstrels.* But men of the first quality, particularly the younger sons and brothers of great houses, followed the profession of minstrelsy, and no wonder, if it be true that they gained the guerdon without having encountered the dangers of war; for many a doughty knight complained that the smiles for which he had perilled himself in the battle field were bestowed upon some idle son of peace at home. The person of a minstrel was sacred, and base and barbarian the man would have been accounted, who did not venerate him that sang the heroic and the tender lay, the magic strains of chivalry, and could shed a romantic lustre over fierce wars and faithful loves.

"In days of yore how fortunately fared
The minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise:
Now meeting on his road an armed knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook: beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodg'd; the next

Tyrwhitt, Chaucer ii., 483. It is the railing of a sour fanatic, who wished to destroy all the harmless pleasures of life. But we may profit by his communication, while we despise his gloom.

I shall add another description of the various subjects of minstrelsy from the Lay le Fraine.

"Some beth of war and some of woe
And some of joy and mirth also;
And some of treachery and of guile,
Of old adventures that fell while;
And some of jests and ribaudy;
And many there beth of fairy;
Of all things that men see,
Most of love, forsooth, there be."

* Sir Orpheo.

† Froissart, vol. ii., c. 26, 52, 163. In Dr. Henderson's History of Wines, p. 283, it is stated that our ancestors mixed honey and spices with their wine, in order to correct its harshness and acidity, and to give it an agreeable flavour. True, but it should also have been remarked that the spices were not always mixed with the wine, but that they were served up on a plate by themselves. This custom is proved from an amusing passage in Froissart, which involves also another point of manners. Describing a dinner at the castle of Tholouse, at which the king of France was present, our chronicler says, "This was a great dinner and well stuffed of all things; and after dinner and grace said, they took other pastimes in a great chamber, and hearing of instruments, wherein the Earl of Foix greatly delighted. Then wine and spices were brought, the Earl of Harcourt served the king of his spice plate, and Sir Gerrard de la Pyen served the Duke of Bourbon, and Sir Monnaut of Nouailles served the Earl of Foix." Vol. ii., c. 264. Another passage is equally expressive: "The king alighted at his palace, which was ready apparelled for him. There the king drank and took spices, and his uncles also; and other prelates, lords, and knights." Thus too, at a celebration of the order of the Golden Fleece, at Ghent, in 1445, Olivier de la Marche, describing the dinner, says, "Longuement dura le disner et le service. Là jouerent et sonnerent menestries et trompettes; et herauts eurent grans dons, et crierent largesse; et tables levées furent les espices aportées, et furent les princes et les chevaliers servis d'espices et de vins, &c. Memoires, d' Olivier de la Marche, in the vol. ix., c. 15, of the great collection of French Memoirs; and in the Morte de Arthur it is said they went unto Sir Persauntes' pavilion, and drank the wine and ate the spices.

* He was a great personage, if wealth could confer dignity. The hospital and priory of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield, London, were founded by Royer or Raherus, the king's minstrel, in the third year of the reign of Henry I., A.D. 1102. Percy, Essay on the Ancient Minstrels, p. 32. The Serjeant of the minstrels was another title for the head of the royal minstrelsy. A circumstance that occurred in the reign of Edward IV. shows the confidential character of this officer, and his facility of access to the king at all hours and on all occasions.

"And as he (king Edward IV.) was in the north country in the month of September, as he lay in his bed, one, named Alexander Carlisle, that was *serjeant of the minstrels*, came to him in great haste, and bade him arise, for he had enemies coming." This fact is mentioned by Warton, on the authority of a historical fragment. ad calc. Sportti Chron. ed. Hearne, Oxon, 1729.

Digitized by Google

Humbly, in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walk'd — protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went,
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse."*

Every page of early European history attests the sacred consideration of the minstrel, and the romances are full of stories, which at least our imagination can credit, of many a knight telling his soft tale in the dress of a love-singing poet. That dress had another claim to respect, for it was fashioned like a sacerdotal robe, as we learn from the story of two itinerant priests gaining admittance to a monastery, on the supposition of their being minstrels; but as soon as the fraud was discovered the poor ecclesiastics were beaten and driven from the monastery by their happier brethren.† The minstrel also was often arrayed in a dress of splendour, given to him by a baron in a moment of joyous generosity. The Earl of Foix, after a great festival, gave to heralds and minstrels the sum of five hundred franks; and he gave to the minstrels of his guest, the Duke of Tourrain, gowns of cloth of gold, furred with ermine, valued at two hundred franks.‡

There were other classes of poets in days of chivalry, who, under the names of troubadours, trouveurs, and minnesingers, were spread over all chivalric countries, and sang the qualities by which a knight could render himself agreeable to his mistress. The board of a baron was sometimes enlivened by a tenson, or dialogue in verse, on the comparative merits of love and war; and the argument was often supported by warmer feelings than those which could influence a hireling rhymer, for the harp of the troubadour was borne by kings, and lords, and knights. The romances, or poems longer than the minstrels' or troubadour lay, were also faithful ministers of chivalry. All their heroes were advocates of the church, and enemies of the Saracens and pagans. The perilous adventures of the Gothic knights, their high honour, tender gallantry, and solemn superstition were all recorded in romances,* and there was not a bay window in a baronial hall without its chivalric volume, with which knights and squires drove away the lazy hours of peace.

The fictitious tales of Arthur and Charlemagne were the study and amusement of the warrior in his moments of ease, and even the few relics of classical literature, which, after the Gothic storm, were cast on the shores of modern Europe, were fashioned anew by chivalry. The heroes of Troy were converted into knights, and Troilus and Cressida moved like a warrior and damsel of chivalric times. Indeed, as the tale of Troy Divine was occasioned by a lady, it blended very readily with the established fictions of the times. And the romancers, like the minstrels and troubadours, were highly favoured by the great, who knew that their actions, unless recorded by *clerc*, could have no duration, and therefore they often made handsome presents to authors in order to have their names recorded in never-dying histories.†

* Wordsworth's Excursion, book ii.

† Wood, Hist. Antiq. Un. Oxon. 1. 67, sub ann 1224; and Percy, Notes on his Essay on the Ancient Minstrels, p. 64.

‡ Froissart, vol. ii., c. 31. Writers on chivalry have too often affirmed, that the minstrels, besides singing, reciting, and playing on musical instruments, added the entertainments of vaulting over ropes, playing with the pendent sword, and practising various other feats of juggling and buffoonery. That this was sometimes the case during all the ages of the minstrelsy art, is probable enough, for the inferior minstrels were in a dreadful state of indigence. But the disgraceful union of poetry and juggling was not common in the best ages of chivalry. Chaucer expressly separates the minstrel from the juggler.

"There mightest thou karols seen,
And folk dance, and merry ben,
And made many a fair tourning
Upon the green grass springing.
There mightest thou see these flouters.
Minstrallis and eke jugelours."
Romaunt of the Rose, 1. 759, &c.

Other passages to the same effect are collected in Anstis Order of the Garter, vol. i., p. 304; and Warton, History of English poetry, vol. ii., p. 55. As chivalry declined, minstrelsy was discountenanced, and its professors, fallen in public esteem, were obliged to cultivate other arts besides those of poetry and music.

* Dunlop, History of Fiction, vol. i., p. 142.

† Wace, a canon of Bayeux, and one of the most prolific rhymers that ever practised the art of poetry, continually reminded the great of the

Digitized by Google

The conversation of knights, like their lives and literature, related only to love and war.

"Then were the tables taken all away,
And every knight, and every gentle squire,
Gan choose his dame with *basciomani** gay,
With whom he meant to make his sport and play,
* * * * *
Some fell to dance; some fell to hazardry;
Some to make love; some to make merriment."

Every knight was welcome at another knight's castle, if it were only for the intelligence he could communicate regarding the deeds of arms that had been done in the countries which he had visited; and the great charm of the castle of the Earl of Foix, to the imagination of Froissart, was the goodly company of knights and squires of honour, pages and damsels, that he met in the hall, chamber, and court, going up and down, and talking of arms and amours.†

"After meat they went to play,
All the people, as I you say;
Some to chamber and some to bower,
And some to the high tower,
And some in the hall stode,
And spake what them thought gode;
Men that were of that cytè,
Inquired of men of other contrè."‡

Knights were wont, at these entertainments, to repose on couches, or sit on benches. The guests were placed two by two, and only one plate was allotted to each pair; for to eat on the same trencher to plate with any one was considered the strongest mark of friendship or love.* Peacocks and pheasants were the peculiar food of knights on great and festival occasions; they were said to be the nutriment of lovers, and the viand of worthies. The peacock was as much esteemed in chivalric as in classic times; and as Jupiter clothed himself with a robe made of that bird's feathers, so Pope Paul, sending to King Pepin a sword, in sign of true regard, accompanied it with a mantle ornamented with a peacock's plumes. The highest honours were conferred on these birds; for knights associated them with all their ideas of fame, and vowed by the peacock, as well as by the ladies, to perform their highest enterprises. A graceful splendour often characterised the circumstances in which the vow of the pheasant or peacock was made.

On a day of public festival, and between the courses of the repast, a troop of ladies brought into the assembly a peacock, or a pheasant, roasted in its feathers, in a golden or silver dish.†

---

benefits which accrued to themselves from patronizing poets.

"Bien entend conuis e sai
Que tuit morrunt, e clerc, e lai;
E que mult ad curte decrée,
En pres la mort lur renumee;
Si per clerc ne est mis en livre,
Ne poet par el dureement vivre.
* * * *
Suvent aveient des barruns,
E des nobles dames beaus duns,
Pur mettre lur nuns en estroire,
Que tuz tens mais fust de eus memoire."

MS. Bib. Reg. iv., c. 11, cited by Mr. Turner, History of England, vol. i., p. 422. 4to.

* This descripton (Spenser's) of chivalric manners, has sadly puzzled his commentators. They are quite agreed, however, on one point, namely, that to kiss the hand of a fair lady (which the word basciomani signified) was not a custom indigenous to England, but that it was imported hither from Italy or Spain. A preux chevalier of the olden time would have been indignant at this insult to the originality of his gallantry.

† Froissart, vol. ii., c. 26.

‡ The Life of Ipomydon, Fytte, 1.

* Thus in the Romance of Perceforest (cited by Ellis, Notes to Way's Fabliaux, vol. i., p. 220) it is said, "There were eight hundred knights all seated at table, and yet there was not one who had not a dame or damsel at his plate!"

In the tale of the Mule without a Bridle, it is said,

"Fill'd with these views the attendant dwarf she sends:
Before the knight the dwarf respectful bends;
Kind greetings bears as to his lady's guest,
And prays his presence to adorn her feast.
The knight delays not; on a bed design'd
With gay magnificence the fair reclin'd
High o'er her head, on silver columns rais'd
With broidering gems her proud pavilion blaz'd.
Herself, a paragon in every part,
Seem'd sovereign beauty deck'd with comeliest art.
With a sweet smile of condescending pride
She seats the courteous Gawaine by her side,
Scans with assiduous glance each rising wish,
Feeds from her food the partner of her dish!"

† M. Le Grand, in his valuable Histoire de la Vie Privée des Français, has given us some very curious information regarding the mode of dressing this distinguished bird. "It was generally," he says, "served up roasted. Instead of plucking the bird (observes the Complete Housekeeper

Digitized by Google

The hall was adorned with scenes, and wooden or other semblances of men, animals, or nature, all being expressive of the object for which the vow of the peacock was to be taken. If the promotion of religious wars was in view, a matron, clad in habiliments of wo, entered the room, and, approaching the dais, or lofty seat, which the chief lords and knights surrounded, she recited a long complaint, in verse, on the evils she suffered under the yoke of infidels, and complained of the tardiness of Europe in attempting her deliverance. Some knights then advanced, to the sound of solemn minstrelsy, to the lord of the castle, and presented two ladies, who bore between them the noble bird, in its splendid dish. In a brief speech the ladies recommended themselves to his protection. The lord promised to make war upon the infidels, and sanctioned his resolution by appealing to God and the Virgin Mary, the ladies and the peacock. All the knights who were in the hall drew their swords and repeated the vow; and, while bright falchions and ladies' eyes illumined the scene, each knight, inflamed by thoughts of war and love, added some new difficulty to the enterprise, or bound himself, by grievous penalties, to achieve it. Sometimes a knight vowed that he would be the first to enter the enemy's territory. Others vowed that they would not sleep in beds, nor eat off a cloth, nor drink wine, till they had been delivered of their emprise. The dish was then placed upon the table, and the lord of the festival deputed some renowned knight to carve it in such a manner that every guest might taste the bird. While he was exercising his talents of carving and subdivision, a lady, dressed in white, came to thank the assembly, presenting twelve damsels, each conducted by a cavalier. These twelve represented, by emblematical dresses, Faith, Charity, Justice, Reason, Prudence, Temperance, Strength, Generosity, Mercy, Diligence, Hope, and Courage. This bevy of bright damsels trooped round the hall, amidst the applauses of the assembly, and then the repast proceeded.*

These were the military, the religious, and the social qualities of a preux chevalier. The gentler feelings of his heart will be best delineated in the next chapter; and, as we have seen him adventurous and imaginative, so we shall find him amorous and true.†

CHAPTER V.

DAMES AND DAMSELS, AND LADY-LOVE.

Courtesy.—Education.—Music.—Graver Sciences.—Dress.—Knowledge of Medicine.—Every-day life of the Maiden.—Chivalric Love.—The Idolatry of the Knight's Passion—Bravery inspired by Love.—Character of Woman in the Eyes of a Knight.—Peculiar Nature of his Love.—Qualities of Knights admired by Women.—A tale of chivalric Love.—Constancy.—Absence of Jealousy.—Knights asserted by Arms their Mistress' Beauty.—Penitents of Love.—Other Peculiarities of chivalric Love.—The Passion universal.—Story of Aristotle.—Chivalric Love the Foe to feudal Distinctions.—But preserved Religion.—When Attachments were formed.—Societies of Knights for the Defence of Ladies.—Knights of the Lady in the Green Field.—Customs in England—Unchivalric to take Women Prisoners.—Morals of chivalric Times.—Heroines of Chivalry.—Queen Philippa.—The Countess of March.—Tales of Jane of Mountfort and of Marzia degl' Ubaldini.—Nobleness of the chivalric Female Character.

If we fancy the knight of chivalry as valiant, noble-minded, and gentle, our

of former times) skin it carefully so as not to damage the feathers; then cut off the feet, stuff the body with spices and sweet herbs; roll a cloth round the head, and then spit your bird. Sprinkle the cloth, all the time it is roasting, to preserve its crest. When it is roasted enough, tie the feet on again; remove the cloth; set up the crest; replace the skin; spread out the tail, and so serve it up. Some people, instead of serving up the bird in the feathers, carry their magnificence so far as to cover their peacock with leaf gold; others have a very pleasant way of regaling their guests. Just before they serve up, they cram the beak of their peacock with wool, rubbed with camphor: then, when the dish is placed upon the table, they set fire to the wool, and the bird instantly vomits out flames like a little volcano."

* Du Chesne, House of Montmorenci, liv. i. p. 29, &c. M. de Couci (c. 7), 664, &c. Olivier de la Marche, p. 412. Hist. de Boucicaut, ed. de Godefroi.

† Like Sir Guiscard Dangle, Earl of Huntingdon, who, according to Froissart, possessed all the noble virtues that a knight ought to have, for "he was merry, true, amorous, sage, sweet

Digitized by Google

imagination pictures to our minds the lady of his love in colours equally fair and pleasing. But we must not lose her individuality in general expressions of admiration, for she had a distinct and peculiar character, which from the circumstances of her life can be accurately traced. The maiden of gentle birth was, like her brother, educated in the castle of some knight or baron, her father's friend, and many of her duties were those of personal attendance. As the young candidate for chivalric honours carved at table, handed the wines, and made the beds of his lord, so his sister's care was to dress her lady, to contribute by music and conversation to her amusement, and to form a part of her state retinue:* and while there was no loss of dignity in this description of service, the practice being universal and of immemorial antiquity, feelings of humility insensibly entered the mind, and a kind consideration for those of harder fortunes softened the severity of feudal pride. Thus a condescending deportment to inferiors was a duty which their moral instructors enforced. It was represented to them by the pleasing image of the sparrow-hawk, which, when called in gentle accents, would come and settle on her hand, but if, instead of being courteous, she were rude and cruel, he would remain on the rock's pinnacle heedless of her calls. Courtesy from persons of superior consideration was the fair right of people of gentle birth though of small estate, for gentility was always to be respected, and to the poor man or woman it ought to be shown, because it gives pleasure to them, and reflects honour on those who bestowed it. A lady once in company of knights and ladies took off her hood and humbled herself courteously unto a mechanic. One of her friends exclaimed in astonishment, "Why, noble dame, you have taken off your hood to a tailor."—"Yes," she replied, "and I would rather have doffed it to him than to a gentleman:" and her courteous friends reputed that she had done right well.†

liberal, preux, hardy, adventurous, and chivalrous." vol. i., c. 384.

* See the verses of Des Escas, a Troubadour at the court of the King of Arragon.

† Knight of the Tower, chap. "How goodly women ought to maintain themselves courteously."

The mental education of women of those days was not of a very high polish. To repeat the prayers of the church, to sing the brief piece of poetry called the lai, or the longer romaunt were the only tasks on the intellect.

"The king had a daughter dear,
That maiden Ysonde hight;
That glee was left to hear
And romance to read aright?"*

The ladies also played upon the harp,

"They were wont to harp and syng,
And be the merriest in chamber comyng."†

The same particular of ancient manners is recorded by another poet.

"The lady that was so fair and bright,
Upon the bed she set down right;
The harpers notes sweet and fine,
Her maids filled a price of wine.
And Sir Degore sat him down,
For to hear the harper's sown."‡

But sometimes the graver sciences were introduced into female education, and Félice, the daughter of Rohand, Earl of Warwick, was not without parallels.

"Gentle she was, and as demure
As ger-fauk, or falcon to lure,
That out of mew were y-drawe,
So fair was none, in sooth sawe:
She was thereto courteous, and free and wise,
And in the seven arts learned withouten miss.
Her masters were thither come
Out of Thoulouse all and some,
White and hoar all they were;
Busy they were that maiden to lere;
And they her lered of astronomy,
Of armsmetrick, and of Geometry;
Of sophistry she was also witty,
Of rhetorick, and of other clergy:
Learned she was in musick;
Of clergy was her none like."§

Maidens were taught that a mild dignity of demeanor beseemed them, and moralising their duty into a thousand similes, their teachers declared that they ought not to resemble the tortoise or the crane, which turn the visage and the head above their shoulders, and wind their head like

* Sir Tristram, Fytte Second, st. 13, and Scott's note.

† Squire of Low Degree.

‡ Sir Degore.

§ Romance of Guy of Warwick.

Digitized by Google

a vane; but their regard and manner ought to be steadfast, in imitation of the beautiful hare, which always looks right on. If an occasion required a damsel to look aside, she ought to turn the visage and body together, and so her estate would be more firm and sure; for it was unmaidenly lightly to cast about her sight and head, and turn her face here and there.*

Simplicity of dress was another part of instruction; but there was to be no lack of jewels of price and other splendid ornaments on festive occasions, and, consistently with the general magnificence of religious worship of the age, maidens were commanded to wear their gorgeous robes at church, and not merely at court festivals. There was a gravity about chivalry which accorded well with the recommendation for women not quickly to adopt new dresses introduced from strange countries. Modesty of attire was the theme of many a wise discourse, and every castle had its story of the daughter of a knight who lost her marriage by displaying too conspicuously the graces of her figure, and that the cavalier who was her intended suitor preferred her sister who had modesty, though not beauty, for her dower.†

All the domestic œconomy of the baronial mansion was arranged by these young maidens: and the consideration which this power gave them was not a little heightened by their sharing with the monks in the knowledge which the age possessed of vulnerary medicaments. This attribute of skill over the powers of nature was a clear deduction from that sublime, prophetic, and mysterious character of women in the ages which preceded the times both of feudalism and chivalry. The healing art was not reduced to an elaborate system of principles and rules, for memory to store and talent to apply, but it was thought that the professors of medicine enjoyed a holy intercourse with worlds unknown to common minds. The possession of more than mortal knowledge was readily ascribed to a pure, unearthly being like woman, and the knight who felt to his heart of hearts the charm of her beauty was not slow in believing that she could fascinate the very elements of nature to aid him. There are innumerable passages in the various works which reflect the manners of chivalric times on the medicinal practice of dames and damsels. A pleasing passage of Spenser illustrates their affectionate tendance of the sick.

"Where many grooms and squires ready were
To take him from his steed fell tenderly;
And eke the fairest Alma met him there
With balm and wine and costly spicery,
To comfort him in his infirmity,
Eftesoones she caus'd him up to be conveyed,
And of his arms despoiled easily:
In sumptuous bed she made him to be laid,
And, all the while his wounds were dressing,
by him stay'd."*

Chirurgical knowledge was also a necessary feminine accomplishment, and we will accept the reason of the cavalier with "high thoughts, seated in a heart of courtesy," for such a remarkable feature in their character. "The art of surgery," says Sir Philip Sidney, "was much esteemed, because it served to virtuous courage, which even ladies would, even with the contempt of cowards, seem to cherish."† A fair maiden could perform as many wonderful cures as the most renowned and skilful leech. The gentle Nicolette successfully treated an accident which her knight Aucassin met with.

"So prosper'd the sweet lass, her strength alone
Thrust deftly back the dislocated bone;
Then, culling curious herbs of virtue tried,
While her white smock the needful bands supplied;
With many a coil the limb she swath'd around,
And nature's strength return'd, nor knew its former wound."

Spenser favours us with the ladies' method of treating a wound.

* Knight of the Tower, chap. "How young maidens ought not lightly to turn their heads here and there."

† Knight of the Tower, chap. entitled, "Of them that will not wear their good clothes on high feasts and holy-days," and, "How the daughter of a knight lost her marriage." Memoires de Louis de la Tremouille, cap. xii., p. 169, &c., in the 14th vol. of the great collection of French Memoires.

* Fairy Queen, book ii., canto 11, st. 49.

† The manners of his times might, perhaps, have been the origin of this picture, for even so late as the reign of Elizabeth, it is mentioned among the accomplishments of the ladies of her court, that the eldest of them are skilful surgeons. Harrison's Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed.

Digitized by Google

"Mekely she bowed down, to weete if life
Yet in his frozen members did remain;
And, feeling by his pulses beating rife
That the weak soul her seat did yet retain,
She cast to comfort him with busy pain:
His double-folded neck she reared upright,
And rubb'd his temples and each trembling vein;
His mailed haberieon she did undight,
And from his head his heavy burganet did light.

Into the woods thenceforth in haste she went,
To seek for herbs that mote him remedy;
For she of herbes had great intendiment,
Taught of the nymph from whom her infancy
Her nourced had in true nobility.
* * * * *
The soveraine weede betwixt two marbles plain,
She powder'd small, and in pieces bruize;
And then atweene her lily handes twain
Into his wound ye juice therefore did scruze;
And round about, as she could well it use,
The flesh therewith she suppled and did steepe
T'abate all spasm and soke the swelling bruise;
And after having search't the intuse deep,
She with her scarf did bind the wound, from cold to keep."*

The every-day life of a young maiden in chivalric times is described with a great deal of spirit in the fine old English tale of the Squire of Low Degree. I am not acquainted with any other passage of the metrical romances which contains so vivid a picture of the usages of our ancestors. To dissipate his daughter's melancholy for the loss of her lover, the King of Hungary says,

"To-morrow ye shall on hunting fare,
And ride, my daughter, in a chair,†
It shall be covered with velvet red,
And cloths of fine gold all about your head;
With damask white and azure blue
Well diapered with lilies new
Your pomelles shall be ended with gold,
Your chains enameled many a fold;
Your mantle of rich degree
Purple pall and ermine fre.

Jennets of Spain that be so white
Trapped to the ground with velvet bright
Ye shall have harp, sawtry, and song,
And other myrthes you among;
Ye shall have Rumney and Malmesyne,
Both ypocrass and vernage wine,
Mount rose and wine of Greek,
Both algrade and despice eke,
Antioch and bastard,
Piment also and gamarde;
Wine of Greek and muscadell,
Both clare priment and rochell,*
The red your stomach to defy,
And pots of osey set you by.
You shall have venison ybake,†
The best wild fowl that may be take.
A lese of greyhounds with you to strike,
And hart and hind and other lyke,
Ye shall be at such a tryst‡
That hart and hind shall come to your fist.
Your disease to drive you fro,
To hear the bugles there yblowe.
Homeward thus shall ye ride,
On hawking by the river's side,
With goss hawk and with gentle falcon,
With eagle-horn, and merlyon.§
When you come home your men among,
Ye shall have revel dance and song,
Little children great and small
Shall sing as doth the nightingale.

Then shall ye go to your even song,
With tenors and trebles among,
Threescore of ropes of damask bright
Full of pearls they shall be pight,‖
Your censers shall be of gold
Indent with azure many a fold:
Your choir nor organ song shall want
With counter note and discant.
The other half on organs playing,
With young children full fair singing.
Then shall ye go to your supper,
And sit in tents in green arbour,
With cloth of arras pight to the ground,
With saphires set and diamond.
The nightingale sitting on a thorn
Shall sing you notes both even and morn.
An hundred knights truly told,
Shall play with bowls in alleys cold,

* Fairy Queen, book iii., canto 5, st. 31, 33.

† Before the year 1680, when coaches were first used in England, as Percy observes, ladies rode chiefly on horseback, either single on their palfreys, or double behind some person on a pillion. Not but in case of sickness, or bad weather, they had horse-litters, and even vehicles called chairs, and carrs or charres. Note on the Northumberland Household Book.

* It is evident that the good King of Hungary was a boon companion, and we will fancy that it was from a very common and natural feeling, that he supposed his daughter's inclinations similar to his own. Of the formidable list of wines which he gives, some names declare their growths very clearly; of the rest, I believe, that Rumney wine means the wine from La Romanée, a vineyard of Burgundy. Dr. Henderson, however, suggests that it was an Andalusian growth. Malmesyne was a Greek wine, from Malvagia in the Morea, the original seat of the Malmsey grape. Vernage was perhaps a Tuscan wine. Osey was Alsatian wine. Respice (vin rapé), was the produce of unbruised grapes, and Bastard was a sweet Spanish wine.

† Baked meats were the usual food of our ancestors. Thus, Chaucer says of his Frankelein (the modern country squire),
"Withoutin *bake-mete* never was his house."

‡ Station. § Two species of hawks

‖ Sewed or quilted.

Digitized by Google

Your disease to drive away,
To see the fishes in pools play.
And then walk in arbour up and down,
To see the flowers of great renown.
To a draw-bridge then shall ye,
The one half of stone, the other of tree;
A barge shall meet you, full right,
With twenty-four oars full bright,
With trumpets and with clarion,
The fresh water to row up and down.

* * * * *

Into your chamber they shall you bring
With much mirth and more liking.
Your blankets shall be of fustain,
Your sheets shall be of cloths of Rayne;*
Your head sheet shall be of pery pight,†
With diamonds set and ruby bright.
When you are laid in bed so soft,
A cage of gold shall hang aloft,
With long pepper fair burning,
And cloves that be sweet smelling,
Frankincense and olibanum,‡
That when you sleep the taste may come,
And if ye no rest can make,
All night minstrels for you shall wake."

In that singular system of manners which we call chivalric, religion was a chief influential principle of action; but scarcely less consequence ought in truth to be given to another feeling apparently incompatible with it; and if Venus, in the Greek mythology, was called the universal cause, her empire seems not to have been less extensive in days of knighthood. A Latin poet, of no mean authority in such subjects, has described love as the sole employment of women's life, and of man's only a part;* and Boccacio says, that he composed his tales for the solace of fair and noble ladies in love, who, confined within their melancholy chambers, had no other occupation, but perpetually to revolve in their minds the same consuming thoughts rendered intolerable by shame and concealment: while man might hunt, hawk, fish, and had a thousand channels for his thoughts.

But the state of society at Rome was not similar to that in the days of knighthood, and though Boccacio lived in those days, he describes the manners of commercial cities rather than of chivalric courts, of fair Florence and not of a frowning baronial castle. The ideas of God and of love were always blended in the heart of the true knight, and to be loving was as necessary as to be devout. Cervantes expresses the feelings of chivalry in the declaration of Don Quixote, that "a knight without a mistress was like a tree without either fruit or leaves, or a body without a soul." A ship without a rudder, a horse without a bridle, were other illustrations of the prevailing sentiment, and more expressive of the characteristic of chivalric love, which assigned superiority to woman, which made her the directress of the thoughts, and inspirer of the courage of her chosen cavalier. "A knight may never be of prowess, but if he be a lover," was the sentiment of Sir Tristram, a valiant peer of Arthur, and it was echoed by every gentle son of chivalry.† Not,

* Rennes in Brittany was highly famous for its manufacture of linen.

† Inlaid with jewels.

‡ A modern princess, as Mr. Ellis says (Specimens of the early English Poets, vol. i., p. 344), might possibly object to breathe the smoke of pepper, cloves, and frankincense during her sleep; but the fondness of our ancestors for those, and indeed for perfumes of all kinds was excessive. Mr. Ellis adds, that in the foregoing description of diversions, the good King of Hungary has forgotten one, which seems to have been as great a favourite with the English and French as ever it was with the Turkish ladies; this is the bath. It was considered, and with great reason, as the best of all cosmetics; and Mr. Strutt has extracted from an old M.S. of prognostications, written in the time of Richard II., a medical caution, to the women against 'going to the bath *for beauty*' during the months of March and November. Women also often bathed together for purposes of conversation. The reader knows that the public baths were not always used for such healthful and innocent purposes.

* "Vos, modo venando, modo rus geniale colendo
Ponitis in varia tempora longa mora.
Aut fora vos retinent, aut unctæ dona palæstræ;
Flectitist aut fræno colla sequaris equi.
Nunc volucrem laqueo, nunc piscem ducitis hamo.
Diluitur posito serior hora mero.
His mihi submotæ, vel si minus acriter utar,
Quod faciam; superest, præter amare, nihil.
Quod superest, facio; teque, o mi sola voluptas,
Plus quoque, quam reddi quod mihi possit, amo."
Ovid. Ep. Hero Leandro.

† Don Quixote affirmed, that no history ever made mention of any knight errant that was not a lover; for were any knight free from the impulses of that generous passion, he would not be allowed to be a lawful knight, but a misborn intruder, and one who was not admitted within

Digitized by Google

indeed, that every knight felt this strength and purity of passion. Spenser has described four cavaliers, and each represents a large class.

"Druon's delight was all for single life,
And unto ladie's love would lend no leisure;
The more was Claribell engaged rife
With fervent flames, and loved out of measure:
So eke lov'd Blandamour, but yet at pleasure
Would change his liking and new lemans prove:
But Paridell of love did make no threasure,
But lusted after all that did him move:
So diversely these four disposed were to love."*

The true knight, he whose mind was formed in the best mould of chivalric principles, was a more perfect personification of love than poets and romancers had ever dreamed. The fair object of his passion was truly and emphatically the mistress of his heart. She reigned there with absolute dominion. His love was,

"All adoration, duty, and observance."

Our old English poet, Gower, whose soul was filled with romantic tenderness and gallantry, says,

"In every place, in every stead,
What so my lady hath me bid,
With all my heart obedient,
I have thereto been diligent."

And every gallant spirit of Gower's days, the reign of Edward III., said of his mistress,

"What thing she bid me do, I do,
And where she bid me go, I go.
And when she likes to call, I come,
I serve, I bow, I look, I lowte,
My eye followeth her about.
What so she will, so will I,
When she would set, I kneel by,
And when she stands then will I stand,
And when she taketh her work in hand,
Of wévying or of embroidrie,
Then can I not but muse and prie,
Upon her fingers long and small."

Gower, in describing the knight's mode of tendance on his mistress, has drawn a pleasing picture of the domestic life of chivalry.

"And if she list to riden out,
On pilgrimage, or other stead,
I come, though I be not bid,
And take her in my arms aloft,
And set her in her saddle soft,
And so forth lead her by the bridle,
For that I would not be idle.
And if she list to ride in chare,
And that I may thereof beware,
Anon, I shape me to ride,
Right even by the chares side,
And as I may, I speak among,
And other while, I sing a song."*

These quotations shows that the expression in ancient times of knights being servants of the ladies was not a mere figure of the imagination. The instances from Gower, however, which prove the propriety of the title, may not be thought exclusively chivalric. A story in Froissart will fully supply the want. A Bourbon knight, named Sir John Bonnelance, a valiant soldier, gracious and amorous, was once at Montferrand, in Auvergne, sporting among the ladies and damsels of the town. While commending his chivalry, they urged him to undertake an enterprise against the English, and she who, as his lady-love was ruler

---

the pale of knighthood at the door, but leaped the fence, and stole in like a thief and a robber. Vivaldo, who was talking with the Don, asserted in opposition to this opinion and statement, that Don Galaor, the brother of Amadis de Gaul, never had any mistress in particular to recommend himself to, and yet for all that he was not the less esteemed. Don Quixote, after borrowing one of Sancho's proverbs, that one swallow never makes a summer, replied that he knew Don Galaor was privately very much in love; and as for his paying his addresses wherever he met with beauty, this was an effect of his natural inclination, which he could not easily restrain. It was an undeniable truth, concluded the Don, that Galaor had a favourite lady whom he had crowned empress of his will; and to her he frequently recommended himself in private, for he did not a little value himself upon his discretion and secrecy in love. This defence of Galaor is very amusing, and Vivaldo submitted to it. But he ought to have adduced the opinions of that mad knight and merry talker of the Round Table, Sir Dynadan, who marvelled what could ail Sir Tristram and many others of his companions, that they were always sighing after women. 'Why,' said la belle Isaud, 'are you a knight and no lover? you cannot be called a good knight, except you make a quarrel for a lady.' 'God defend me!' replied Dynadan, 'for the joy of love is so short, and the sorrow thereof and what cometh thereof endureth so long."

Morte d'Arthur, lib. i., c. 56.

* Fairy Queen, book iv., canto 9, st. 21.

* Gower's Confessio Amantis, book iv., p. 103, &c.

Digitized by Google

of his actions, told him that she would fain see an Englishman, for she had heard much of the valiancy of the knights of England. Bonnelance replied, "that if it should ever be his good fortune to take one, he would bring him into her presence." Soon afterwards he was able to perform his word. He took to Montferrand some English prisoners, and addressing her who fancied the wish of seeing an Englishman, he said "that for her love he had brought them to the town." The ladies and damsels laughed, and turned the matter to a great sport. They thanked him for his courtesy, and entertained him right sweetly during his three days abode at Montferrand.*

The knight, whose heart was warmed with the true light of chivalry, never wished that the dominion of his mistress should be less than absolute, and the confession of her perfect virtue, which this feeling implied, made him preserve his own faith pure and without a stain. Love was as marked a feature in the chivalric character as valour; and, in the phrase of the time, he who understood how to bréak a lance, and did not understand how to win a lady, was but half a man. He fought to gain her smiles, for love in brave and gentle knights kindled aspirations for high desert and honour. "Oh! that my lady saw me," was the exclamation of a knight in the pride of successful valour as he mounted the city's wall, and with his good sword was proving the worth of his chivalry.† He wore her colours, and the favour of his lady bright was the chief ornament of his harness. She judged the prize at the tournament, assisted him to arm, and was the first and the most joyous to hail his return from the perils of war.

"A damisel came unto me,
The seemliest that ever I se,
Luffumer* lifed never in land,
Hendly she take me by the hand;
And soon that gentle creature
Al unlaced mine armure
Into a chamber she me led,
And with a mantle she me cled;
It was a purper fair and fine,
And the pane of rich ermine;
Al the folk war went us fra,
And there was none than both we twa;
She served me hendely to hend,
Her manners might no man amend;
Of tong she was true and renable,
And of her semblant soft and stabile.
Fullfain I would, if that I might,
Have woned† with that sweet wight
And when we sold go to sopere
That lady with a lufforn chere,
Led me down into the hall,
That war we served wele at all."‡

A soldier of chivalry would go to battle, proud of the title, a pursuivant of love§ and in the contests of chivalric skill, which, like the battles of Homer's heroes, gave brilliancy and splendour to war, a knight challenged another to joust with a lance for love of the ladies; and he commended himself to the mistress of his heart for protection and assistance. In his mind woman was a being of mystic power; in the forests of Germany her voice had been listened to like that of the spirit of the woods, melodious, solemn, and oracular; and when chivalry was formed into a system, the same idea of something supernaturally powerful in her character threw a shadowy and serious interest over softer feelings, and she was revered as well as loved. While this devotedness of soul to woman's charms appeared in his general intercourse with the sex, in a demeanor of homage, in a grave and stately politeness, his lady-love he regarded with religious constancy. Fickleness would have been a species of impiety, for she was not a toy that he played with, but a divinity whom he worshipped. This adoration of her sustained him through all the perils that lay before his reaching his heart's desire; and loyalty (a word that has lost its pristine and noble meaning) was the

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 117 and 118.

† Essais Histor. sur Paris, by St. Foix, vol. iii., p. 263, cited by Strutt. Sports and Pastimes, &c. "As it happened, Sir Palomydis looked up towards her (la belle Isaud) where she lay in the window, and he espied how she laughed, and therewith he took such a rejoicing that he smote down what with his spear and with his sword all that ever he met, for through the sight of her he was so enamoured of her love, that he seemed at that time, that had Sir Tristrem and Sir Launcelot been both against him, they would have won no worship of him."—Morte d'Arthur, book x., c. 70.

* Lovelier. † Lived.

‡ Romance of Ywaine and Gawin.

§ Froissart, c. 249. "Le duc de Lancastre avoit de son heritage en Champaigne: c'estassavoir un chastel entre Troye et Chalons, qui s'appelait Beaufort, et duquel un escuyer Anglais (qui se nommoit le poursuivant d'amour) estait capitaine."

Digitized by Google

choicest quality in the character of the preux chevalier.

It was supported, too, by the state of the world he lived in. He fought the battles of his country and his church, and he travelled to foreign lands as a pilgrim, or a crusader, for such were the calls of his chivalry. To be the first in the charge and the last in the retreat was the counsel which one knight gave to another, on being asked the surest means of winning a lady-fair. Love was the crowning grace, the guerdon of his toils, and its gentle influence aided him in discharging the duties of his gallant and solemn profession. The lady Isabella, daughter of the Earl of Jullyers, loved the lord Eustace Damberticourt for the great nobleness of arms that she had heard reported of him; and her messengers often carried to him letters of love; whereby her noble paramour was the more hardy in his deeds of arms.* "I should have loved him better dead than alive," another damsel exclaimed, on hearing that her knight had survived his honour.

No wonder that in those ages of violence bravery was the manly quality, dear, above all others, in woman's eyes. Its possession atoned for want of every personal grace; and the damsel who, on being reproached for loving an ugly man, replied, "he is so valiant I have never looked in his face," apologized for her passion in a manner that every woman of her time could sympathize with. As proficiency in chivalric exercises was the only distinction of the age, it would have been contrary to its spirit and laws for a gentle maiden to have loved any other than a knight who had achieved high deeds of arms. The advancement of his fame was, therefore among the dearest wishes of her heart, and she fanned his love of noble enterprise in order to speed the hour of their union. The poets and romance-writers of the days of chivalry bear ample testimony to the existence of this state of feeling, and to the perils which brave men underwent to gain fair ladies' smiles; but all their tales must yield in pathos to the following simple historical fact: — When the Scots were endeavouring to throw off the yoke which Edward I. had imposed on them, the recovery of the castle of Douglas was the unceasing effort of the good Lord James. It was often lost and won; for if the vigilance of the English garrison relaxed for a moment, the Scots, who lived in the neighbourhood, and was ever on the watch, aided their feudal lord in regaining the fortress, which, however, he could not maintain long against the numerous chivalry of England. The possession of this castle seemed to be held by so perilous a tenure, that it excited the noblest aspirations for fame in the breasts of the English; and a fair maiden, perplexed by the number of knights who were in suit of her, vowed she would bestow her hand upon him who preserved the adventurous or hazardous castle of Douglas for a year and a day. Sir John Walton boldly and gladly undertook the emprise, and right gallantly he held possession of the fortress for some months. At length he was slain in a sally which Douglas provoked him to make. On his person was found a letter which he had lately received from his lady-love, commending his noble chevisance, declaring that her heart was now his, and praying him to return to her forthwith, without exposing himself to further peril. The good Lord James of Douglas grieved when he read this letter, and it was generous and gallant of him to lament that a brother knight should be slain when his fairest hopes of happiness seemed on the point of being realized.*

The loves of chivalric times must often have been shaded with gloom, and so convulsed was the state of Europe, so distant were its parts often thrown from each other, that the course of true love seldom ran smoothly, and affianced knights and damsels more frequently breathed the wish of annihilating time and space than is necessary in the happier monotony of modern times. In almost every case of attachment absence was unavoidable, and constancy, therefore, became a necessary virtue of love in chivalry.

"Young knight whatever, thou dost arms profess,
And through long labours huntest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of fickleness,

* Froissart, liv. i., c. 197.

* Barbour's Bruce, book vi. Hume's (of Godscroft) History of the House of Douglas, p. 29, &c.

The description of the good Lord James of Douglas, in Barbour's Bruce, is not uninteresting.

Digitized by Google

In choice; and change, of thy dear loved dame;
Lest thou of her believe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening do thy heart remove
For unto knight there is no greater shame
Than lightness and inconstancy in love."*

His mistress was ever present to his imagination, and he felt there would be a witness to his disloyality. Even if he could dismiss her picture from his mind, his own sense of honour preserved his virtue, and the reply of a knight to a beautiful temptress, that though his sovereign-lady might never know of his conduct, yet his heart, which was constantly near her, could not be ignorant, was conceived in the purest spirit of chivalry.

The troubadours, who were the teachers of the art of love, refined upon this respectful passion of the knight in a very amusing manner. They were wont to affirm, that though a knight saw cause for jealousy, yet if his lady-love were to deny the circumstances, he was to reply that he was convinced of the verity of her assertions; but he really did believe he had witnessed such and such matters.†

Chivalric love had, indeed, its absurdities as well as its impieties. It was a pleasing caricature of chivalry, when the knight of La Mancha stationed himself in the middle of a high road, and calling to the merchants of Toledo, who were bound to the silk fairs at Murcia, forbad them to pass, unless they acknowledged that there was not in the universe a more beautiful damsel than the empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso. For the knights of chivalry were not satisfied to fight in defence of the ladies, and to joust in their honour, but from the extravagancy of their love, each knight maintained, at the point of his lance, that his mistress surpassed all other ladies in beauty.* The knight Jehan de Saintré (whose education in chivalry has been already described by me) vowed to wear a helmet of a particular shape, and to visit, during three years, the courts of Europe, maintaining against all their chi-

"In visage was he some deal gray,
And had black hair, as I heard say,
But then he was of limbs well made,
With bones great and shoulders braid.
His body well made and lenzie,
As they that saw him said to me,
When he was blyth he was lovely
And meek and sweet in company.
But who in battle might him see
Another countenance had he.
And in his speech he lisp some deal,
But that set him right wonder well."
The Bruce, p. 13.

* Spenser's Fairy Queen, book i., canto 4, st. 1.

† "E se la us fa gelos
E us en dona razo,
E us ditz c'ancre no fo
De so que dels huelhs vis,
Diguatz Don. En suy fiz
Que vos disetz vertat,
Mas yeu vay simiat."

The name of the gentleman who thus consented to distrust the evidence of his senses was Amanieu des Escas, a favourite troubadour in Spain during the thirteenth century. One of the "statutes" in the Court of Love is, according to Chaucer's report of it, pretty much in the same strain:

"But think that she, so bounteous and fair,
Could not be false, imagine this algate,
And think that tongues wicked would her appair,
Slandering her name, and worshipful estate,
And lovers true to settin at debate,
And though thou seest a fault, right at thine eye,
Excuse it blith, and gloss it prettily."
Chaucer's, Urry's edit. fol. 563.

* Mr. Skottowe, in his Essays on Shakspeare (essays which have done more for the right understanding of the great dramatist than all the works of his commentators from Theobald to Malone), observes that, in the play of Troilus and Cressida, a courtly knight of chivalry is often seen under the name of a Trojan hero. The following challenge of Hector is conceived and excuted in the true chivalric spirit.

"Kings, princes, lords,
If there be one, among the fair'st of Greece,
That holds his honour higher than his ease;
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril;
That knows his valour, and knows not his fear;
That loves his mistress more than in confession,
(With truant vows to her own lips he loves,)
And dare avow her beauty and her worth
In other arms than hers, — to him this challenge.
Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,
Shall make it good, or do his best to do it.
He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms;
And will to-morrow with his trumpet call,
Midway between yon tents and walls of Troy,
To rouse a Grecian that is true in love:
If any come, Hector shall honour him;
If none, he'll say in Troy, when he retires,
The Grecian dames are sun burn'd, and not worth
The splinter of a lance."
Troilus and Cressida, act i, sc. 3.

Digitized by Google

valry, the beauty of his mistress. Four knights and five squires, who had made a similar vow, were his companions. At a tournament held by the emperor of Germany, the noble undertaking was held to be accomplished, and the emblems of the emprise were unchained from the left shoulder of the gallant knights and squires.* Indeed, wherever a knight went, to court or to camp, he asserted the superiority of his lady and his love, but he hurled his defiances not against simple merchants, as our right worshipful knight Don Quixote did, but against persons of his own rank, who were in amours as well as himself. Instances of this chivalric disposition occur frequently in chivalric history: but Cervantes caricatured the romances, and not the sober chronicles of chivalry, when in reply to the natural inquiry of one of the merchants regarding the beauty of the lady, he made his hero exclaim, "Had I once shown you that beauty, what wonder would it be to acknowledge so notorious a truth? the importance of the thing lies in obliging you to believe it, confess it, affirm it, swear it, and maintain it, without seeing her." But the display of chivalric bravery in avowal of woman's beauty proceeded from so noble a feeling, that it must not be censured or satirised too severely, for

> "Who is the owner of a treasure
> Above all value, but without offence,
> May glory in the glad possession of it?"

As history, however, should be a record, and not a panegyric, I proceed to observe, that the most marked display of the extravagancies of our knights took place in the courts of love; but as I have dilated on that topic in another work, I am precluded of treating the subject here, and it is the tritest of all the subjects of chivalry. Equally ridiculous among the amatory phrenzies of the middle ages was the society of the penitents of love, formed by some ladies and gentlemen in Poictou, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. They opposed themselves to nature in every thing, on the principle that love can effect the strangest metamorphoses. During the hottest months of summer, they covered themselves with mantles lined with fur, and in their houses they sat before large fires. When winter came they affected to be burning with the fires of love, and a dress of the slightest texture wrapt their limbs. This society did not endure long, nor was its example pernicious. A few enthusiasts perished, and reason then resumed her empire.*

The knight was as zealous in the gentle as in the more solemn affections of the soul. He believed that both God and love hated hard and hypocritical hearts. In a bolder strain of irreverence he thought that both God and love could be softened by prayer, and that he who served both with fidelity would secure to himself happiness in this life and the joys of Paradise hereafter. On other occasions the gallant spirit of chivalry spoke more rationally. Love, according to one renowned knight, is the chaste union of two hearts, which, attached by virtue, live for the promotion of happiness, having only one soul and one will in common.

> "Liege lady mine! (Gruélan thus return'd,)
> With love's bright fires this bosom ne'er hath burn'd.
> Love's sovereign lore, mysterious and refined,
> Is the pure confluence of immortal mind;
> Chaste union of two hearts by virtue wrought,
> Where each seems either in word, deed, and thought,
> Each singly to itself no more remains,
> But one will guides, one common soul sustains."†

So prevailing was amatory enthusiasm, that not only did poets fancy themselves inspired by love, but learned clerks were its subjects, and in spite of its supposed divinity some natural satire fell upon the scholar who yielded to its fascination. In Gower's Confessio Amantis, the omnipotence of love is strikingly displayed; for besides those whom we might expect to see at the feet of the goddess, we are presented with Plato and Socrates, and even him who was the object of veneration bordering on idolatry in the ages which we in courtesy to ourselves call dark. Gower, the moral Gower, says with some humour,

* Cronique de Saintré, vol. iii., c. 65.

* This society of the penitents of Love is mentioned by the Chevalier of the Tower, whose book I have so often quoted in illustration of the chivalric character.

† The Lai of Sir Gruélan.

Digitized by Google

"I saw there Aristotle also,
Whom that the queen of Greece also
Hath bridled, that in thilke time
She made him such a syllogisme
That he forgot all his logike."

The story whereon this sentence was founded was among the most popular of the times. The delights of love had made Alexander pause in the career of ambition. His host of knights and barons were discontented at the change, and Aristotle, as the tutor and guardian of his youthful course, endeavoured to rouse anew the spirit of the hero. The prince attempted no lengthened reply to this appeal to his chivalry;

"Sighing, alone he cried, as inly mov'd,
Alas! these men, meseems, have never lov'd."

The grave saws of the sage took root, however, in Alexander's heart, and he absented himself from his mistress. She wailed her fate for some time in solitude, but at length assured that it was not the mere capriciousness of passion which kept him from her, she forced herself into the presence of her lord. Her beauty smiled away all dreams of glory from his mind, and in the fondness of his love he accused Aristotle of breaking in upon his joy. But the dominion of his passion was only momentary, and recovering the martial tone of his soul, he declared the sad necessity of their parting. She then requested a brief delay, promising to convince the king that his tutor's counsel derived no additional recommendation from his practice, for that he stood in need of as much instruction as Alexander himself. Accordingly, when the first appearance of the next morning, the damsel repaired to the lawn before the chamber where Aristotle lay. As she approached the casement, she broke the stillness of the air by chanting a love ditty, and the sweetness of her wild notes charmed the philosopher from his studious page. He softly stole to the window, and beheld a form far fairer than any image of truth which his fancy had just previously been conceiving. Her face was not shrouded by vail or wimple, her long flaxen tresses strayed negligently down her neck, and her dress, like drapery on an ancient statue, displayed the beauty of a well-turned limb. She loitered about the place on pretence of gathering a branch of a myrtle-tree, and winding it round her forehead. When her confidence in her beauty assured her that Aristotle was mad for her love, she stole underneath the casement, and, in a voice checked by sighs, she sang that love detained her there. Aristotle drank the delicious sounds, and gazing again, her charms appeared more resplendent than before. Reason faintly whispered that he was not born to be loved, and that his hair was now white with age, his forehead wrinkled with study; but passion and vanity drove away these faint remonstrances, and Aristotle was a sage no more. The damsel carelessly passed his window, and in the delirium of his love he caught the floating folds of her robe. She affected anger, and he avowed his passion. She listened to his confession with a surprise of manner that fanned his flame, and she answered him by complaining of the late coldness of Alexander. The greybeard, not caring for a return of love, so that she accepted his suit, promised to bring his pupil to her feet, if she would but confer some sign of favour upon himself. She feigned an intention of compliance, but declared that, before she yielded, she must be indulged in a foolish whim which long had distracted her fancy. Aristotle then renewed his professions of devoted love, and she in sentences, broken by exclamations of apparent shame at her folly, vowed that she was dying to mount and ride upon the back of a wise man. He was now so passionately in love, that the fancies of his mistress appeared divinest wisdom to his mind, and he immediately threw himself along the ground in a crawling attitude. She seated herself in a gorgeous saddle which she placed on his back, and, throwing a rein round his neck, she urged him to proceed. In a few moments they reached the terrace under the royal apartments, and the king beheld the singular spectacle. A peal of laughter from the windows awoke the philosopher to a sense of his state, and when he saw his pupil he owned that youth might well yield to love, as it had power to break even the frost of age.

Such was the lay of Aristotle which the wandering minstrel chanted in the baronial hall, and the damsel in her lady's

Digitized by Google

bower, and the pleasing moral of the fable was not more sincerely echoed by the shouts of the gallant knights and squires than by the broken sighs of beauty.

> "Mark ye, who hear me, that no blameful shade
> Be thrown henceforth on gallant or on maid.
> For here, by grave example taught, we find
> That mighty love is master of mankind.
> Love conquers all, and love shall conquer still,
> Last the round world how long soe'er it will."*

It is singular to observe that in the north and in the south, in Germany and in Languedoc, the love of the cavalier bore the same character, the same blending of tender and devotional feelings. The troubadour burned tapers, and caused masses to be said for the success of his love, and when the fervour of his passion for his mistress was crossed by religious awe, he declared that the part of his heart which God held was still under the superior dominion of his lady-love. The German knight wrote poems to the honour of the Virgin Mary and the damsel of his heart, and it is not always easy to distinguish to which of these persons his vows are addressed.† He adored the shadow, nay, the very neighbourhood of his mistress, and declared that nothing could induce him to violate his vow of fidelity. Here, however, the resemblance ceases, for the knights of France, England, and Spain were not more highly distinguished for chivalric courtesy, than the Germans were remarkable for ferocity and savageness.‡ Once, and once only, were their courts of love in Germany. They were established by Frederic Barbarossa, and they did not long survive their founder.

Chivalric love took delight in reconciling and joining the opposites of the world.§ It was no cold and calculating principle; it abrogated the distinctions of wealth and rank, and many a knight, whose whole fortune lay in his prowess, gained the hand of high-born beauty. "How can I hope," observed a young candidate for chivalry to a lady of high estate, "how can I hope to find a damsel of noble birth, who will return the affection of a knight that, ungraced by rank, has only his good sword to trust to?"—"And why should you not find her?" replied the lady; "are you not gently born? are you not a handsome youth? have you not eyes to gaze on her, ears to hear her, feet to move at her will, body and heart to accomplish loyally her commands? and, possessed of these qualities, can you doubt to adventure yourself in the service of a lady, however exalted her rank?"*

A squire of low degree often aspired to the hand of a king's daughter:

> "And I have seen that many a page
> Have become men by marriage."

The intenseness of passion, and the generousness of soul implied in this state of manners, were sternly opposed by feudal pride and tyranny; but chivalry could not always beat down the absurd distinctions of society. When the Countess of Vergy returned the passion of Sir Agolane, she was obliged to love in secret, lest the dignity of the court of Burgundy should be offended.† The maidens themselves sometimes sanctioned the prejudices of feudalism, in opposition to the generous feelings of chivalry and nature. Felice, daughter of Rahand, Earl of Warwick, disdained to return the passion of Guy, her father's steward, till an angel in a dream commanded her to love him.‡

Agreement in religious opinion was as necessary as sympathy of souls in the loves of chivalry; and many a story is related of a knight reposing in a lady's chamber, where, instead of adoring the divinity of the place, he assailed her with a fierce invective against her religious creed.§ On such occasions he forgot even his courtesy, and shamed his knighthood by calling her a heathen hound:

* Way's Fabliaux, vol. ii., p. 170. The *moral* of the Lay of Aristotle brings to mind Voltaire's two celebrated lines under a statue of Cupid:—

> "Qui que tu sois, tu vois ton maitre,
> Il l'est, le fut, ou le doit être."

† Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, p. 8, &c.

‡ Ibid. p. 41.

§ Lai of the Canonesses and the Gray Nuns.

* L'Histoire et plaisante Cronicque de petit Jehan de Saintré, vol. i., c. 7.

† Lai of the Countess of Vergy.

‡ Romance of Guy of Warwick.

§ Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, p. 104.

Digitized by Google

"I will not go one foot on ground
For to speak with an heathen hound;
Unchristen hounds I rede ye flee,
Or I your heart's blood will see."

But

"'Mercy,' she cried, 'my lemman sweet!'—
(She fell down and 'gan to weep) —
'Forgive me that I have mis-said,
I will that ye be well assayed!
My false gods I will forsake,
And Christendom for thy love take.'
'On that covenant,' said Sir Bevis than,
'I will thee love, fair Josyan!'"*

The occasions which kindled the flame of love in the heart of the knight and the maiden of chivalry were various, and many of them well calculated to give rise to romantic and enthusiastic attachments. Sometimes the parties had been educated in the same castle, and passion insensibly succeeded childish amusements. The masque and the ball were often the theatre of love; but, above all other scenes, it spread its light over the brilliant tournament. Performed in honour and in view of the ladies, it was there that loved exerted its mightiest power. She who gave the prize bestowed almost universally her heart upon the brave and skilful vanquisher, and many were the tears she shed, if she found that the knight had been proving his puissance only to win the heart of some other fair one. It often happened that the circumstances of life carried a young cavalier to a baronial castle, where he found more peril in the daughter's fair looks than in the frowning battlements of her father. At the feast which welcomed the stranger, eyes mingled in love, and the suddenness of passion was always considered as the strongest proof of its purity and strength. The damsel might then avow her affection without any violation of maidenly shame; for generous, confiding love, reading another's heart in its own, dreaded no petty triumphs of vanity from confessing its fondness. It often occurred that a knight, weary and wounded, was confided to the ministrations of woman's tenderness; and Spenser, who has read the history as well as the romance of chivalry, tells us,

"O foolish physick, and unfruitful pain
That heals up one, and makes another wound."

The rude state of society, which it was the noble object of chivalry to soften, presented many occasions for the display of generous affections, and love was the grateful return of protection. A cavalier called the Knight of the Swan reinstated a lady in the possessions of which the Duke of Saxony had deprived her. Indignant that the throne, and not chivalry, should be regarded as the fountain of justice, knights sometimes formed themselves into associations for the express object of defending the rights of all ladies that required their aid. At one period (during the reign of Charles VI.) of great violence in France, the ladies and gentlewomen of the country laid before the king grievous complaints of their sufferings from powerful lords, and lamented that gallantry was so much degenerated, that no knights and squires had attempted to defend them. They appealed, therefore, to the king, as the fountain of justice, to afford them protection. This appeal roused the dormant chivalry of France; and the valiant knight and marshal, Boucicaut,* whose skill as a jouster will be described anon, gathered round him twelve preux chevaliers, and the fraternity avowed themselves champions of oppressed dames and damsels. The gallantry of their object was proclaimed to the world by the device on their shields of a fair lady in a green field, and their letters of arms, circulated throughout France, promised that they would assist all ladies and gentlewomen who were injured in their honours or fortunes.†

* Romance of Sir Bevis. In Ariosto, the heroine Bradamante wishes Rugiero to be baptized; and he replies, with great gallantry, that he would put his head not only into water, but into fire, for the sake of her love.

Non che nell' acqua, disse, ma nel foco
Per tuo amor porre il capo mi fia poco.
Orlando Furioso, canto xxii., st. 36.

* Don Quixote himself was not a greater idolater of the ladies, than was the valiant Marshal Boucicaut, who, however, carried his fear of impertinent intrusion to a more romantic pitch than perhaps the ladies liked, for he would not even permit the knights of his banner to look a second time at a window where a handsome woman was seated. Mémoires, partie 3, c. 7.

† Boucicaut, Mémoires, partie i., c. 38, 39. The commencement of the letters of those knights of the lady in the green field is worthy of insertion on account of its chivalric tone. "A toutes haultes et nobles dames and damoiselles, et à

Digitized by Google

The same generous feeling warmed the hearts of the English chivalry. We become acquainted with this feature of our ancient national character, not in dry monkish chronicles, but in the living page of one of our earliest and greatest poets. Chaucer makes all the persons of his dramatic tale speak agreeably to their rank and station in the world; and he puts into the mouth of his very perfect and gentle knight the following spirited description of the gallant feelings of English nobles and gentles in the time of Edward III.

"For every knight that loved chivalry.
And would his thanks have a passant name,
Hath prayed that he might be of that game,
And well was him that thereto chosen was!
For if there to-morrow such a case,
Ye know well that every lusty knight
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in Engleland, or elsewhere,
They would, hir thanks, willen to be there
To fight for a lady, a! benedicite,
It were a lusty sight for to see!"*

And thus it continued in every age of chivalric history. Noble knights of prowess were ever periling themselves in the cause of woman. So late as the year 1425, when the title to certain territories in Hainault was contested between the English Duke of Gloucester and John of Brabant on behalf of the lady Jacquiline, those gallant cavaliers, the bastard of St. Pol, and André de Humieres appeared at Hesden with silver rings on their right arms, proclaiming the superior title of Jacquiline.†

These are a few of the historical facts, which show that the ancient romancers did not paint from their imagination when they described gallant cavaliers wandering over the gloomy waste of feudal Europe, in order to redress wrongs and injuries, to relieve widows, and defend the honour of damsels. Sometimes a knight rode alone, and like the valorous Don Quixote, left it to his horse's direction to go which way he pleased. In other cases they went in parties of three or four in quest of adventures. That they might surprise the enemy they sought for, they changed or disguised their armorial distinctions. A year and a day was the general term for enterprises of this nature; and at the conclusion they rendered to their sovereign mistresses an account of their adventures, and ingenuously confessed their faults and misfortunes. — But I find myself stepping into the regions of romance, which are not the province of this work. I return therefore, to the realities of chivalry, which are no less pleasing than its fictions.

The protection of widows and orphans, and all ladies of virtuous repute, was indeed the serious duty ever present to the imagination of a preux chevalier. The praise-worthy soldier was he who chose to fight for dames and damsels in preference

tous seigneurs, chevaliers, et escuyers, apres tous recommendations, font ásçavoir les treize chevaliers compagnons, portans en leur devise l'escu verd à la dame blanche. Premièrement pour ce que tout chevalier est tenu de droict de vouloir garder et deffendre l'honneur, l'estat, les biens, la renommée, et la louange de toutes dames et damoiselles de noble lignée, et que iceulx entre les autres sont tres desirans de le vouloir faire, les prient et requierent que il leur plaise que si aulcune ou aulcunes est ou sont par oultraige, ou force, contre raison diminuées ou amoindries des choses dessus dictes, que celle ou celles à qui le tort ou force en sera faicte veuille ou veuillent venir ou envoyer requerir l'un des dicts chevaliers, tous ou partie d'iceulx, selon ce que le cas le requerra, et le requis de par la dicte dame ou damoiselle, soit un, tous ou partie, sont et veulent estre tenus de mettre leurs corps pour leur droict garder et deffendre encontre tout autre seigneur, chevalier, ou escuyer, en tout ce que chevalier se peut et doibt employer au mestier d'armes, de tout leur pouvoir, de personne à personne, jusques au nombre dessus dicts et au dessoutes, tant pour tant. Et en breifs jours après la requeste à l'un, tous ou partie d'iceulx faicte de par les dictes dames ou damoiselles, ils veulent presentement eulx mettre en tout debovir d'accomplir les choses dessus dictes, et si brief que faire se pourra. Et s'il advenoit, que Dieu ne veuille que celuy au ceulx qui par les dictes dames ou damoiselles seroient requis, eussent essoine raisonnable; a fin que leur service et besongne ne se quisse en rien retarder qu'il ne prist conclusion, le requis ou les requis seront tenus de bailler prestement de leurs compagnons, par qui le dict faict seroit et pouvoit estre mené à chef et accomply.

* The Knight's Tale, l. 2108, &c. The following is Dryden's version of the above lines. The spirit of the last two lines of Chaucer is entirely lost.

"Beside the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the lists, and envy'd to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor seems it strange, for every noble knight
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight."

† Monstrelet, vol. vi., p. 167. Boucicaut, Memoirs, c. 382.

Digitized by Google

to contending in vain-glorious frays, and with equal spirit it was thought that death was too slight a punishment for the man who could offer scathe or dishonour to, or deceive or wrong, a gentle lady. From this generous consideration for woman proceeded the honourable maxim in chivalry, of its not being just or courteous to take ladies in war.* When a town was captured, the heralds of the conqueror proclaimed his will, that no violence nor displeasure should be done to any lady or gentlewoman. In the reign of Edward III. Caen fell into the hands of the English, and Sir Thomas Holland preserved many ladies, damsels, and nuns, from outrage worse than death. About the same time the castle of Poys was taken by the English, and two noble knights (one was the renowned Sir John Chandos) saved from violation two fair damsels, daughters of the Lord of Poys. The ladies were conducted into the presence of Edward, who, for his honour, made them good cheer, and caused them to be carried in safety to a town friendly to their family.† And the generous feelings of cavaliers for ladies were nobly requited. In the wars of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, the Emperor Conrad, as an offended sovereign, had refused all terms of capitulation to the garrison of Winnisberg; but as a courteous knight, he permitted the women to depart with such of their precious effects as they themselves could transport. The gates of the town were thrown open, and a long procession of matrons, each bearing a husband, or a father, or brother, on her shoulders, passed in safety through the applauding camp.‡

Some writers have severely censured the morals of the chivalric æra, and according to them every species of licentiousness was practised by its dames and damsels. This opinion is as erroneous as the one which it superseded, that in the times we speak of every knight was brave, and every woman was chaste; an assertion bearing more liberality than truth on its face, considering that it refers to a period of seven or eight centuries, and that the objects of the panegyric were the largest part of the European world. For my part, I shall not, like the knight of La Mancha, challenge to a *joust à l'outrance* any discourteous cavalier who has the audacity to declare that Queen Madasima was scandalously familiar with a barber-surgeon; but I think that our imaginations do not altogether deceive us in painting the days of chivalry as days of feminine virtue.

If we regard the times in reference only to their baronial and feudal features, the view is deeply dyed with turpitude, and the romances, whence the denunciations against the ladies of forepast ages have been drawn, are not sparing in their pictures of licentiousness. But chivalry was the golden thread that ran through the middle ages, the corrective of vice, the personification of virtue. That it did not altogether succeed in colouring with its brightness the surrounding gloom is sufficiently true, and the times warranted the assertion of a character of Amadis de Gaul, that our country yields, as others do, both good and bad. The romances present us with instances of the profligacy of women, and so they also do of the baseness of knights: but as no one will contend that chivalry did not in general inspire its professors with sentiments of honour, so its virtuous influence cannot in fairness be denied to the maidens of its age. Let us not, as Spenser says, blame the whole sex for the fault of one.

"Fair ladies that to love captivated are
And chaste desires do nourish in your mind,
Let not her fault your sweet affections mar;
No blot the bounty of all womankind,
'Mongst thousands good, one wanton dame to find:

* Froissart, liv. i., c. 389.

† Froissart, liv. ii., c. 6.; liv. i., c. 124, 125. "Puis passerent oultre destruisans le pais d'entour et vindrent ainsi jusques au chastel de Poys: ou il y avoit bonne ville, et deux beaux chasteaux: mais nul des seigneurs n'y estait, fors deux belles damoiselles, filles au Seigneur de Poys: qui tost eussent este violees, si n'eussent esté deux chevaliers d'Angleterre: messire Jehan Chandos, et le sire de Basset: qui les deffendirent: et pour les garder les menerent au roy: qui pour honneur leur fit bonne chere, et leur demanda ou elles voudroyent estre, si disent à Corbie. Là les fit le roi conduire sans pareil.

‡ I have taken this story from Gibbon, Antiquities of the House of Brunswick, Miscellaneous Works, vol. iii., p. 530,) who says it is told (if he is not mistaken) by the Spectator, and may certainly be supported by ancient evidence.

Digitized by Google

Amongst the roses grow some wicked weeds;
For this was not to love, but lust, inclin'd;
For love doth always bring forth bounteous deeds,
And in each gentle heart desire of honour breeds."*

The romance writers were satirists, but they had more humour than malignity. Every one of them introduces a magical test of feminine virtue, a drinking cup, a mantle or a girdle. This is harmless; and their general censure of women is without point; for they were for the most part men of profligate habits, and judged the other sex by the standard of their own vices.

"Safe her, I never any woman found
That chastity did for itself embrace
But were for other causes firm and sound;
Either for want of handsome time and place,
Or else for fear of shame and foul disgrace."†

This is the burthen of all their declamations against women; and Spenser has shown how little credit he gave to it, for he does not let it proceed from the mouth of any of his preux chevaliers, but from a wretched profligate, misnamed the squire of dames.‡

However highly some enthusiastic minds may have coloured the manners of the chivalric ages, still it is unquestionable that the love of the knight was not the mere impulse of passion, but that the feeling was raised and refined by respect. Now, as nature is ever true to herself, as certain causes have had certain operations in all ages and in all countries, so this purity of love must have been followed by a corresponding correctness of morals. Women had every reason to retain and support the virtues of their nature; for it was only in behalf of those of fair reputation and honour, that the knight was compelled by his principles to draw his sword; all others were without the pale of chivalry; and although many instances can be found in the romances of feminine indiscretion, yet the princes in the celebrated romance of Tirante the White accurately describes the general feeling when she submits to lose all her claims on the noble chevisance of knights, if she failed in observing a promise of marriage which she had given to a gallant cavalier that loved her.

The knights, though courteous to the highest polish of refinement, were rigid and inflexible censors; and in those days as well as in these, each sex formed the character of the other.* The cavalier in travelling would write on the door of a castle where a dame of tarnished reputation resided, some sentence of infamy; and on the contrary, he would pause at the door of a lady of pure honour, and salute her courteously. Even on solemn and public occasions distinctions were made between women in matters of ceremony. If any lady of sullied fame took precedence of a dame of bright virtue, a cavalier would advance and reverse the order, saying to her who was displaced, "Lady, be not offended that this lady precedes you, for although she is not so rich or well allied as you are, yet her fame has never been impeached."† Here, therefore, chivalry vindicated its purity, and showed itself as the moral guide of the world. Its tendencies were beneficent; for Christianity was deeply infused into all its institutions and principles, and it not only spread abroad order and grace, but strung the tone of morals to actions of virtue.

All ladies were not of the opinion of Amadis de Gaul, that their best weapons were sighs and tears. What they admired they imitated; and a high-spirited damsel would, in private, divest herself of her robe, gird round her a belt, and drawing

* Fairy Queen, book iii., canto 1, st. 49.
† Ibid. Book iii., canto 7, st. 60.
‡ Another writer says,
"Ah! well was he that he forbore to blame;
Misfortune be his lot and worldly shame,
Nor, dying, let him taste of heavenly bliss
Whoe'er of dame or damsel speaks amiss;
And sure no gentle clerk did ever vex
With foul discourtesy the gentle sex,
But churl or villain of degenerate mind,
Brutal and base, the scandal of his kind."
S. Rose's Partenopex of Blois, canto ii.

And in a similar strain of courtesy is the beginning of the Fabliau of Constant du Hamel, as translated by M. Le Grand. "Je ne pardonne pas qu'on se moque des dames. On doit toute sa vie les honorer et les servir et ne leur parler jamais que pour leur dire choses courtoises. Qui agit autrement est un vilain."

* As the romance of the Rose says,
"Les chevaliers mieux en valoient,
Les dames meilleures etoient
Et plus chastement en vivoient."
† Caxton's Chevalier of the Tower, cap. "How every good woman ought to keep her renommée."

Digitized by Google

its sword from the scabbard, fight with the air till she was wearied. The gallant youths of chivalry called a lady of this martial temperament — le bel cavalier. Were we to meet in romances with dames engaged in mortal combat, we should say that the writers had not faithfully represented the manners of the times; but such facts are recorded by sober chroniclers. Two ladies decided some fierce disputes by the sword. Each summoned to her aid a band of cavaliers, and the stoutest lances of Normandy felt no loss of dignity in being commanded by a woman. The lady Eloisa and the lady Isabella rode through their respective ranks with the address of experienced leaders, and their contest, like that of nations, was only terminated by burning and plundering each other's states. In the crusades, parties of fair and noble women accompanied the chivalry of Europe to the Holy Land, charming the seas 'to give them gentle pass,' and binding up the wounds of husbands and brothers after a well foughten field with the bold Musselman. Sometimes they wielded the flaming brand themselves, and the second crusade in particular was distinguished by a troop of ladies harnessed in armour of price, and mounted on goodly steeds. A lady often wore a sword even in times of peace, and every great landed proprietress sat *gladio cincta* among the justices at sessions and assizes. In England, particularly, was this martial spirit recognised, for in the time of Edward the first a lady held a manor by sarjeanty to conduct the vanguard of the king's army as often as he should march into Wales with one; and on its return it was her duty to array the rear-guard.*

The victory of the English over the Scots at Neville Cross is mainly attributable to the spirited demeanor of Philippa, wife of Edward the Third. At her father's court in Hainault, she had witnessed war in its splendid image, the tournament; and now, in a perilous moment, when the king her husband was far away, and the fate of England was in her hands, she showed that she was not unworthy of her race or her alliance. She rode among the battles or divisions of her host, exhorting them to perform their *devoir*, to defend the honour of her lord the king of England, and in the name of God she implored every man to bear a good heart and courage, promising them that she would reward them better than if her lord the king were personally in the field. She then quitted the ranks, recommending her soldiers to the protection of God, and of St. George, that special defender of the realm of England. This exhortation of the queen nerved the hearts of the English yeomen, and they shot their arrows so fiercely and so wholly together, that the Scottish battle-axe failed of its wonted might.*

For the heroism of women, the page of Scottish history furnishes a remarkable instance. In the beginning of the year 1338, William de Montague, Earl of Salisbury, by command of the Earl of Arundel, the leader of the army of Edward III., laid siege to the castle of Dunbar, the chief post which the Scots possessed on the eastern coast of their country. The castle stood upon a reef of rocks which were almost girdled by the sea, and such parts of it as could be attacked were fortified with great skill. The Earl of March, its lord, was absent when Salisbury commenced the siege, but the defence lacked not his presence. His wife was there, and while to the vulgar spirits of the time, she was known, from the unwonted darkness of her eyes and hair, as Black Agnes, the chivalric sons of Scotland joyfully beheld a leader in the person of the high-spirited daughter of the illustrious Thomas Ranulph, Earl of Moray. The Countess of March performed all the duties of a skilful and vigilant commander. She animated her little band by her exhortations and munificence; she roused the brave into heroism, and shamed the timid into courage by the firmness of her bearing. When the warlike engines of the besiegers hurled stones against the battlements, she, as in

* Harleian M.S. No. 166, 2087, p. 93, cited in Retrospective Review, No. 19, p. 95.

* Froissart, liv. i., c. 138. Lord Hailes is not pleased that the queen should have shared in the honour of the battle, and wishes to doubt her presence, because Froissart is the *only* writer who states it. Upon which Mr. Turner (History of England, vol. 2, p. 204, 8vo.) very judiciously observes, that, if we disbelieve all the facts of this reign, for which we have *only* Froissart's authority, our skepticism must take a large sweep.

Digitized by Google

scorn, ordered one of her female attendants to wipe off the dust with a handkerchief, and when the Earl of Salisbury commanded the enormous machine called the *sow*, to be advanced to the foot of the walls, she scoffingly cried out, 'Beware, Montague, thy sow is about to farrow,' and instantly by her command a huge fragment of rock was discharged from the battlements, and it dashed the engine to pieces. Many of the men who were about it were killed, and those who crawled from the ruin on their hands and knees were deridingly called by the Scots, Montague's pigs. Foiled in his attempts, he endeavoured to gain the castle by treachery: he bribed the person who had the care of the gates to leave them open; but the man, faithful to his duty as well as to his pecuniary interest, disclosed the whole transaction to the Countess. Salisbury himself headed the party who were to enter; finding the gates open, he was advancing, when John Copeland, one of his attendants, hastily passing before him, the portcullis was let down, and Copeland, mistaken for his lord, remained a prisoner. The Countess, who from a high tower was observing the event, cried out to Salisbury with her wonted humour, 'Farewell, Montague; I intended that you should have supped with us, and assisted in defending this fortress against the English.'

The English turned the siege into a blockade, but still without success. The gallantry of the Countess was supported by some favourable circumstances, and finally, in June, the Earl of Salisbury consented to a cessation of hostilities and he abandoned the place.*

But the most interesting of all the heroines of chivalry was Jane, Countess of Mountfort, who, as Froissart says, had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion. She was a worthy descendant of those German women whom Tacitus describes as mixing with the warriors, administering refreshment, and exhorting them to valour. About the year 1341, the right to the duchy of Bretagne was disputed between the Earl of Mountfort and Charles of Blois. The questions turned on certain points of inheritance which the earl dreaded the court of Paris would decide in favour of his rival, who was a relation of the French king. He, therefore, sought another alliance, and repairing to England, he performed homage for the duchy to Edward III.* His next steps were directed to Paris, but his journeys were not so secretly taken as he expected; for on presenting himself before King Philip he was charged with having acknowledged the sovereignty of the English monarch. The earl pretended that his journey to England had only related to his private affairs, but the king did not credit his story, and in distrust of his purposes he ordered him to remain in Paris. Mountfort, equally suspicious of his sovereign's honour, effected his escape from the city in the guise of a merchant. He went to Brittany, and took his station in the castle of Nantes. The decision of the court at Paris was adverse to his claims; and the successful candidate, Charles of Blois, levied an army, and pursued his former rival, who was taken in his retreat, conveyed to Paris, and lodged in the Louvre.

To those who did not know the noble spirit of his countess the cause of the Mountfort family seemed hopeless. She was at Rennes when he was taken prisoner, and although she had great sorrow in her heart, yet she valiantly recomforted her friends and soldiers, and showing them her little son John, she said, 'Sirs, be not too sore abashed of the earl my lord, whom you have lost (he was but a man): behold my little child, who shall be by the grace of God his restorer, and he shall advance you all, and I have riches enough: you shall not lack; and I trust I shall prosper in such wise that you shall be all recomforted.'† All her friends and soldiers

* Wyntown's Cronykil of Scotland, book viii., c. 32 Lord Hailes, vol. 2, p. 218, 221. Border Antiquities, vol. ii., p. 170.

* Avesbury, p. 97. Froissart, liv. i., c. 69.

† La Comtesse de Montfort avoit courage d'homme et cœur de lion. Elle estoit en la cité de Rénes, quand elle entendit que son seigneur fut prins; et, combien qu'elle eust grand dueil au cœur, elle reconfortoit tous ses amis vaillamment, et tous ses soudoyers: et leur monstroit un petit fils (qu'elle avoit appelé Jehan, comme son pere) et leur disoit, Haa, seigneurs, ne vous ébahissez mie de monseigneur, que nous avons perdu. Ce n'estoit qu'un homme. Veez cy mon petit enfant, qui sera (si Dieu plaist) son restorier, et vous sera des biens assez et j'ai de savoir à planté; si vous en donneraz assez, et

Digitized by Google

vowed to die in her service; and she then went on to her other fortresses and towns, replenishing them with warlike stores and provisions, and exhibiting her little son to the people, in order to rouse the allegiance of the friends of her family. She stationed herself in Hennebon, a town seated near the shores of Brittany.*

In the following summer Charles of Blois was aided by the whole puissance of France in his attempt to make himself complete master of Brittany; but so able were the dispositions of the countess, that, instead of sweeping over the whole country as they expected, they were detained before Rennes, and it was not till after much labour that they won it. The countess, in the meanwhile, had sent one of her knights, Sir Amery of Clysson, into England, desiring royal succour, on condition that the Earl of Mountfort's son and heir should marry a daughter of the king, who was to be adorned with the highly splendid title, the Duchess of Brittany. Edward III., always anxious to strengthen his power in France, accepted the alliance, and ordered one of his noblest knights of prowess, Sir Walter Manny, to join the valiant countess with three thousand archers. Charles of Blois, after the capture of Rennes, was counselled to lay siege to Hennebon; but before he reached that town Jane de Mountfort was apprised of his purpose, and she commanded the watch-bell to be sounded, and every man to be armed, and standing at his post. When Sir Charles and the Frenchmen came near the town, they pitched their tents; but many of their gay and valorous spirits went skirmishing to the barriers. Some of the cavaliers of Hennebon did not suffer them to brandish their swords in the air; and it was only the shades of night that separated those preluders of battle. The next day the Frenchmen spent in council, and it was resolved that a general assault should be made on the barriers. Accordingly, on the third morning they fiercely pressed to the outward works of the town, and continued the assault till noon, when they retired with diminished forces. The lords of France rallied their soldiers, and urged the assault anew; but they that were within defended themselves right valiantly. The countess herself, clad in mail, and mounted on a goodly courser, rode from street to street, exhorting her people to defend their posts; and if in the din of battle her woman's voice was sometimes drowned, nothing could mar her cheering smiles, which lighted the flame of noble chevisance in every gallant breast. She caused damsels and other women to cut short their kirtels, and carry stones and pots full of lime to the walls, to be cast upon the enemy. She then mounted a tower, and espied that the Frenchman's camp was deserted. Her resolution was immediately taken: she drew around her three hundred of her best knights, and, grasping a targe and spear, and mounting again her good steed, she quitted the town by a gate which the enemy had overlooked. At the head of her gallant troop she made a short circuit, and then dashed into the Frenchmen's lodgings. When the assailants, reverting their eyes, saw their tents on fire, and heards cries of terror from a few boys and varlets in the camp, they quickly returned to their lodgings to stop the conflagration. The countess and her noble band could not cope with so vast a force, and her retreat to the city being cut off, she took the road to the castle of Brest, where she was received with great joy. For five days the good soldiers of Hennebon wist not of the fate of their right valiant lady; but on the sixth morning they saw her golden banners glittering in the rising sun, and a hill in the distance crowned by a noble troop of five hundred lances, which her beauty and her just cause had drawn to her side at Brest. With the gay curvetting pace of gallant cavaliers progressing to a tournament, they gallantly held on their way to the town, smiling defiance to the martial front of the French, and entered Hennebon amidst the flourishes of their own trumpets, and the exulting cries of the people.

vous pourchaceray tel capitaine, parquoy vous serez tous reconfortes. Froissart, liv. i., c. 73.

* Mrs. Charles Stothard, in her interesting Tour through Normandy and Brittany, observes (p. 231), that the massive walls which once surrounded the town of Hennebon, remain in many places entire, and must have been impregnable in their strength and construction.

Digitized by Google

But the siege was advanced by the French with such courage, and their engines so dreadfully injured the walls, that the soldiers of Hennebon were in time discomfited. All except the countess were anxious to yield the town upon honourable terms; but she hoped for succour from Edward; and while her knights and men-at-arms sullenly guarded the walls which fronted the enemy, a solitary warder paced the ramparts that looked towards England. One day the members of her council were on the point of compelling her to submit, when, casting her eyes on the sea, whereon she had so often gazed in vain, she saw a dark mass rising out of the horizon. Her smile of fearful joy, before she discovered that it was the English fleet, excited the attention of her friends. They all rushed to the window, but her sight was the most piercing, for her heart was the most deeply anxious, and she was the first to exclaim, "I see the succours of England coming!" The joyful news quickly spread, the walls of Hennebon were crowded with the townsfolk, and the English fleet entered the harbour. When the soldiers landed, she went to them with great reverence, and feasted them right hospitably. She lodged the knights and others in the castle and in the town, where she dressed up halls and chambers for them; and the next day she made them a great feast at dinner. The exploits of Sir Walter Manny and his archers will be more appropriately related in another place. The siege of Hennebon was raised, and it is not unworthy of notice as a trait of manners, that on one occasion of valiancy on the part of the English, the countess descended from the castle with a glad cheer, and went and kissed Sir Walter Manny and his companions, one after another, two or three times, like a valiant lady.*

After some time a truce was concluded between Sir Charles of Blois and the Countess of Mountfort, their aiders and assisters; and the countess, on the invitation of Edward III., took ship for England, accompanied by the Earls of Richmond, Pembroke, Salisbury, Suffolk, Oxford, the barons Stamford, Spenser, Bourchier, and divers other knights of England, and their companies. When they were off Guernsey they were approached by Sir Loyes of Spain and his fleet. At first the countess supposed it was a friendly purpose, for Sir Loyes, as the ally of Sir Charles of Blois, was virtually bound by the treaty: but she was soon assured of his unchivalric purpose. The mariners cried to the knights, "Sirs, arm yourselves quickly, for these Genoese and Spaniards will soon attack you." All in a moment the Englishmen sounded their trumpets, and reared their standards with the great banner of St. George, and marshalled themselves on the decks of the ships, the archers, as on land, being in front.

"Looking far forth into the ocean wide,
A goodly ship with banners bravely dight,
And flag in her top-gallant I espied,
Through the main sea making her merry flight;
Fair blew the wind into her bosom right,
And the heavens look'd lovely all the while,
That she did seem to dance as in delight,
And at her own felicity did smile."*

And in this gallant trim the English fleet bore down upon the superior force of their ungenerous foe. The arrows of the one side, and the cross-bows of the other, did murderous execution; and when the lords, knights, and squires came together, the battle was so dreadful that it furnished matter of song to the minstrels of England and France for years afterwards. The countess that day was worth the bravest knight: she had the heart of a lion, and, with a sharp glaive in her hand, she fought fiercely. They contended till it became so dark that one could scarcely know another. The fleets then separated, the men remaining in their harness, intending to renew the battle next morning. But at midnight a tempest arose so horrible that every one thought the end of the world was approaching; and those very cavaliers who, a few hours before had gallantly courted death, would now have abandoned their chivalry and their cause, if a safe landing could have been effected.†

* Froissart, c. 82. Lors descendit la Comtesse du Chastel, à joyeuse chere, et vint baiser messiu Gautier de Manny et ses compaignons, les uns apres les autre, deux fois ou trois, comme vaillante Dame.

* Spenser, Vision of the World's Vanity, st. 9.

† Like Gonzalo in the Tempest. "Now I would give a thousand furlongs of sea for an

Digitized by Google

The battle was not renewed the next day; the English fleet sailed to Brittany; the troops landed near Vannes, which they immediately besieged, the countess being always foremost in the press. Soon afterwards Edward III. went to France, in the contest for whose throne the affairs of Brittany were lost, and the noble Countess of Mountfort disappeared from the scene,* while her husband escaped from prison only to die of a fever at Hennebon.†

A few years after this beautiful display of the chivalric character of woman in France, the gloom of war in Italy was illuminated by a noble trait of female heroism. Marzia, a lady of the family of the Ubaldini, so celebrated for its virtue and noble gestes, was the wife of Francesco d'Ordelaffi, lord of Forli, the only prince in Romagna who maintained his independence against the tyranny of the papal power. Knowing her firmness and spirit, he entrusted the defence of the town of Cesena to his wife, while he himself maintained the more important position of Forli. In the beginning of the year 1357, Marzia tore herself from her husband, and, throwing aside the gorgeous robe of peaceful power, donned the casque and the cuirass. She stationed herself in Cesena with two hundred soldiers, equipped like knights, and the same number of ordinary troops. She was accompanied also by her son and daughter, and that sage councellor of the Ordelaffi family, Sgariglino de Pétragudula. An army ten times more numerous than all the defenders of Cesena soon beleaguered the place. At the end of April some of the terrified burgesses opened the gates of the lower part of the town to the enemy; but in that moment of peril Marzia remembered that her husband had declared that, unless the pope would treat with him on honourable terms, he would sustain a siege in every one of his castles, and when he had lost them he would defend the walls of Forli, and then its streets, its squares, his palace, and the last tower of his palace, rather than give his consent to surrender that which was his own. Marzia retreated into the upper part of the town with such of the soldiers and citizens who continued faithful to her. She now discovered that Sgariglino had been a traitor. Justice then had her due, and the head of him whom no feelings of honour or gallantry could preserve in the path of virtue was rolled from the battlements among the besieging army. Marzia relied entirely on her own wisdom and courage; she took on herself all the duties of governor and captain, and, wearing her cuirass both by night and day, she braved all those hardships which in former moments of happiness and ease, she would have thought herself incapable of supporting. But the besiegers smiled with indifference at her courage, for their miners were slowly and surely effecting her ruin. She was compelled to retreat to the citadel with four hundred soldiers and citizens, who vowed to be faithful to death. The miners persevered, and at length the citadel almost hung in air. The father of Marzia at that moment reached Cesena, and his passage had been facilitated by the legate. He entreated his heroic daughter to surrender, as bravery had accomplished its utmost, and still the besiegers were gradually prevailing. Her reply was simple and firm, — that her husband had given her a duty to perform, and that she must obey, without forming any opinion on the nature of his command. Her heroism was not supported by the people, for they unanimously declared the folly of further resistance. Compelled, then, to surrender, she herself opened the negotiations; and so skilfully did she act, so much dreaded was the despair to which she might be tempted, that she obtained from the legate a treaty, whereby it was agreed that all the soldiers who had bravely supported her might return home with their arms and equipments. On the 21st of June she opened the gate of the citadel: she disdained to ask any favour for herself; and the legate, untouched by any chivalric sympathy for female heroism, cast her and her children into prison.*

acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. The wills above be done; but I would fain die a dry death." Act i., sc. 1.

* The principal facts in the heroic life of the Countess of Mountfort are recorded by Froissart, c. 68, 72, 80, 91, &c. Lobineau, Histoire de Bretagne, vol. i., p. 320, &c. Argentré, Histoire de Bretagne, liv. vii., c. 9, 10.

† Hist. Gen. de la France, 1. 452.

* See the chronicle of M. Villani in the 14th

Digitized by Google

The honorary titles of ladies in days of chivalry favoured this martial spirit in women. The wife of a knight was often called equitissa, or militissa, or chevaliére. In France, too, ladies, as ruling over fiefs, having the right of war, judicature, and coining money, could confer the honour of knighthood. But in general the feudal law opposed the chivalry of women, for a woman alone could not hold a fief, it not being supposed that she could head her vassals or accompany her liege lord into the field. The instances, therefore, that are scattered over the middle ages of the brave gestes of women sprang from the spirit of chivalry and not from any other principle of society. They were always praised, and joyfully remembered; and when the direction of war was entirely usurped by men, the world reverted with a melancholy pleasure to the chivalry of womankind.

"Where is the antique glory now become,
That whilome wont in women to appeare?
Where be the brave atchievements done by some?
Where be the battles, where the shield and spear,
And all the conquests which them high did rear,
That matter made for famous poets verse,
And boastful men so oft abasht to hear?
Be they all dead, and laid in doleful hearse?
Or do they all sleep, and shall again reverse?"*

Though 'meek-eyed women' were 'without fear,' yet this martial disposition was never displayed at the sacrifice of the sex's milder qualities. The same lady who placed a lance in rest was in her castle gentle and courteous, dispensing hospitality, tending the sick, or reading romance in hall and bower. Her heart was as tender as her's who was rocked in pleasure's wanton lap. Spenser's picture of his martial maid, Britomart, in love, represents the whole class of chivalric heroines:

"Thenceforth the father in her lofty crest,
Ruffed of love, gan lowly to availe;
And her proud portance and her princely gest,
With which she erst triumphed, now did quail,
Sad, solemn, sour, and full of fancies frail,
She woxe yet wist she neither how, nor why
She wist not, silly maid, what she did ail,
Yet wist she was not well at ease perdy,
Yet thought it was not love, but some melancholy."*

There were other points in the character of women in days of chivalry hardly necessary to be noticed as not being peculiar to the times. The artifices and sleights of some of them would beseem more refined ages. To repress the presumption of lovers when circumstances did not favour an avowal of passion, they would reprove the sighs and glances which they pretended to see interchanged between the young squires and maidens of the table; but the admirer of the dames sometimes mistook this demeanour for the sign of a coquettish spirit, and left the lady to lament his dulness.†

vol. of Muratori, Rerum Scrip. Ital.; and Sismondi, Histoire des Rep. Ital., tom. vi., c. 45. Italy has not many romantic associations, and there are now no remains of Cesena to awaken the admiration of the traveller to the heroism of Marzia. Forsyth, Remarks on Italy, vol. ii., p. 266.

* Fairy Queen, book ii., canto 4, st. 1.

* Ibid. Book iii., canto 2, st. 27.

† "The lady's heart was on him cast,
And she beheld him wonder fast;
Ever on him she cast her eye,
Ipomodon full well it seye;[a]
Anon it gave him in his thought,
To loke again let would be not.
Nor no more coward thought he to be
Of his looking than was she.
The lady perceived it full well,
Of all his looking every dell,
And therewith began to shame,
For she might lightly fall in blame,
If men perceived it any thing,
Betwixt them two such looking,
Then would they say all bydene,[b]
That some love were them between;
Then should she fall in slander,
And lose much of her honour.
She thought to warn him privily,
By her cousin that set him by.
'Jason,' she said, 'thou art to blame,
And therewith the ought to shame,
To behold my maid in vain;
Every man to other will sayne,
That betwixt you is some sin,
Of thy looking, I rede,[c] thou blynne.'[d]
Ipomydon him bethought anon,
Then that she blamed Jason,
Without deserving every dell:
But the enchesone[e] he perceived well.
Down he looked and thought great shame,
That Jason bore for him the blame.
Still he sat, and said no more,
He thought to dwell no longer there."
Romance of Sir Ipomydon.

a Saw.
b Together.
c Council.
d Cease.
e Occasion.

Digitized by Google

The spirit of chivalry, which disposed the heart to all noble feelings, was not universal in its influence, and we accordingly read of ladies who were deformed by the mood of envy and detraction.

> "Then was the lady of the house
> A proud dame and malicious,
> *Hokerfull iche mis-segging**
> Squeamous and eke scorning."†

But the subject need not be pursued further; for it is woman, as formed by chivalric principles, and not as uninfluenced by that noble spirit whose lineaments it is my purpose to portray. That lofty consideration in which she was held had, as we have seen, a remoter origin than the days of chivalry, and to that elevation much of her moral dignity may be ascribed. But chivalry saved her from being altogether oppressed into slavery and degradation under the tyranny of feudalism. That odious system endeavoured to bring under its sway even the very affections of the heart; for not only no woman of rank and estate could marry without the consent of her sovereign, but in some countries she was obliged to accept a husband at his nomination, unless for a large pecuniary payment he restored her to the privileges of her sex. By preserving woman in her noble state of moral dignity, chivalry prevented the harsh exercise of feudal rights. A sovereign who prided himself on his knighthood could never offend the inclinations of one of that sex which by his principles he was bound to protect and cherish. Chivalry hung out the heart-stirring hope that beauty was the reward of bravery. A valiant, but landless knight was often hailed by the whole martial fraternity of his country as worthy the hand of a noble heiress, and the king could not in every case bestow her on some minion of his court. Woman was sustained in her proud elevation by the virtues which chivalry required of her; and man paid homage to her mind as well as to her beauty. She was not the mere subject of pleasure, taken up or thrown aside as passion or caprice suggested; but being the fountain of honour, her image was always blended with the fairest visions of his fancy, and the respectful consideration which she, therefore, met with, showed she was not an unworthy awarder of fame. Fixed by the gallant warriors of chivalry in a nobler station than that which had been assigned to her by the polite nations of antiquity, all the graceful qualities of her nature blossomed into beauty, and the chastening influence of feminine gentleness and tenderness was, for the first time in his history, experienced by man.

* Full of frowardness, each mis-saying or reviling, as Ellis renders the passage.

† Lai le Fraine.

CHAPTER VI.

TOURNAMENTS AND JOUSTS.

Beauty of Chivalric Sports.—Their Superiority to those of Greece and Rome.—Origin of Tournaments.—Reasons for holding them.—Practice in Arms.—Courtesy.—By whom they were held.—Qualifications for Tourneying.—Ceremonies of the Tournament.—Arrival of the Knights.—Publication of their names.—Reasons for it.—Disguised Knights.—The Lists.—Ladies the Judges of the Tournaments.—Delicate Courtesy at Tournaments.—Morning of the Sports.—Knights led by Ladies, who imitated the Dress of Knights.—Nature of Tourneying Weapons.—Knights wore Ladies' Favours.—The Preparation.—The Encounter.—What Lance Strokes won the Prize.—Conclusion of the Sports.—The Festival.—Delivery of the Prize.—Knights thanked by Ladies.—The Ball.—Liberality.—Tournaments opposed by the Popes.—The Opposition unjust.—The Joust.—Description of the Joust to the Utterance.—Joust between a Scotch and an English Knight.—Jousting for love of the Ladies.—A singular instance of it.—Joust between a French and an English Squire.—Admirable skill of Jousters.—Singular questions regarding Jousts.—An Earl of Warwick.—Celebrated Joust at St. Inglebertes'.—Joust between Lord Scales and the Bastard of Burgundy.—The Romance of Jousts.—The Passage of Arms.—Use of Tournaments and Jousts.

All our most delightful imaginings of chivalry are associated with the tournament. We see in fancy's mirror the gay and graceful knight displaying on his plumed steed the nobleness of his bearing, and the lady of his affections smiling upon his gallant skill, while the admiring people in rude and hearty joy

Digitized by Google

shout their loud acclaims. Those who were illustrious for ancestral or newly acquired renown met in the listed plain. The fierceness of war was mellowed into elegance, and even feudalism abated something of its sternness, when called on to perform tendance on the ladies and damsels who graced the scene. Baronial pomp, knightly gallantry, woman's beauty, gay caparisons, rich attire, and feudal pageantry, throng the mind in wild and splendid confusion, when we hear the herald's trumpet-clang summoning the knights to achievement. It was in the tournament especially that the chivalric nations of Europe asserted their superior claims to gracefulness and humanity; for though the Greeks might vaunt their Olympic games, yet in them woman's favour did not bestow the garland, and though matrons mingled with senators in the Coliseum, and a virgin gave the signal for the commencement of the sports, yet the tortures and death of their fellow-creatures constituted the amusement.

Our ancestors were so proud of the Trojan descent which their historians deduced for them, that they even regarded the games which Æneas celebrated to the honour of his dead father, Anchises, as the origin of their own knightly joust and tournament. But in those games there was no encounter of two lances as in the joust, and no courteous battle between two parties of warriors, as was the case in the tournament. This learned enthusiasm was needless and absurd; for the knights might have discovered in the nature and tendency of circumstances, and in the practice of their known and immediate forefathers, sufficient matter of originality. The Romans were wont to exercise themselves in mock combats, and so were the Goths;* but it would be difficult to prove any chain of connexion between these people. War was an art in the middle ages, and a long and painful education preceded the practice of it. It was the delight as well as the occupation of the world; for fame,† fortune, and woman's love,* could only be obtained by gallant bearing. Hence we find that thoughts of war were not abandoned in times of peace, and that some softened images of battle formed the grace of festive solemnities.

The martial spirit of the world was nourished by such customs, for kings were always eager to hold tourneys for the better training up of soldiers in feats of arms.† It was the beneficial nature of tournaments to shed the amenities and courtesies of peace over the horrid front of war. Thus there were rules for conducting these images of battle which no knight could violate without forfeiting his title to chivalry. The display of address, with as little danger as possible to life and limb, was the chief character of these encounters, and skill, therefore, in real war, became more esteemed than brute violence. To profit by the mischance of an adversary would, in the tournament, have been considered unknightly; and it followed that even in the most deadly encounters of nations no cavalier would avail himself of any accident happening to his foe.

Military exercises, when performed by two parties of cavaliers with hurtless weapons, were called tournaments. If the occasion were high and solemn, heralds repaired to different courts, announcing their sovereign's purpose of holding martial exercises at a particular time, and inviting all those who valued their knighthood, and respected dames and maidens, to repair to the appointed city, and prove their chivalry.‡

* Du Cange gravely quotes Saint Isidore for this truth; and it is credible even upon less solemn authority.

† Thus Holingshed, speaking of a royal joust and martial tournament, held at Smithfield in 1389, says, "And so many a noble course and other martial feats were achieved in those four days, to the great contentation and pleasure of many a young bachelor desirous to win fame." P. 474, edit. 1587.

* The objects and tendencies of tournaments are extremely well expressed by Jeffry of Monmouth: — "Many knights famous for feats of chivalry were present, with apparel and arms of the same colour and fashion. They formed a species of diversion, in imitation of a fight on horseback; and the ladies being placed on the walls of the castles, darted amorous glances on the combatants. None of these ladies esteemed any knight worthy of her love but such as had given proof of his gallantry in three several encounters. Thus the valour of the men encouraged chastity in the women, and the attention of the women proved an incentive to the soldier's bravery." Lib. ix., c. 12.

† Holingshed, vol. ii., p. 252, reprint.

‡ Froissart, vol. ii., c. 175.

Digitized by Google

In Germany matters were somewhat different, and should be stated. Except in Saxony (which had its own tournaments), the Germans who were entitled to appear in the tourneying lists were divided into four companies; namely, that of the Rhine — of Bavaria — of Swabia — and of Franconia. The assembled cavaliers were called the chivalry of the four countries. Each country by rotation held the tournament, and chose its leader or judge of the sports, who appointed three ladies to give the arms to the knights, and three others to distribute the prizes. It was usual for one of the ladies to be a wife, another a widow, and the third a maiden.*

Originally, in most countries, no person could tourney unless he proved himself to be maternally a knight of gentle birth, by four descents, and displayed a legitimate coat-armour: but this regulation was every where relaxed in favour of hardy knights who could not boast of ancestral honours.† In early times, knights, whether bannerets or bachelors, contended in the listed plain; but, subsequently, the squire (both the follower of the knight and the soldier of the third class of chivalry) was permitted to joust or tourney with knights.

Safe-conduct through hostile lands was always allowed to those who wished to tourney; and the silence and solitude of the country in those dark times were pleasingly relieved by bands of jolly and amorous cavaliers, with trains of squires and pages, riding apace to court to the tune of a merry roundelay. It was particularly the custom of newly-made knights to attend a tournament in order to show that they deserved their spurs, and to establish their prowess.‡

Nor did simple knights alone thus progress to the tournament. Kings and princes pricked over the plain in gallant and graceful array; for though their rank excused them from performing many knightly observances, yet their chivalric spirit disdained the pride of their station, and their souls were inflamed with the noble desire of illustrating their royalty by deeds of high knighthood.

The knights were wont to arrive at the respective hostels or tents assigned them by the kings-at-arms and the heralds somewhile before the day of tournament; and they affixed their armorial ensigns over the entrances, and raised their banners and pennons in front of their parades. The tourneying knights were known by their heraldry, and this publication of their names was made for a very noble purpose. If any one of them had been guilty of unchivalric deportment, the matter might be proved before the ladies or other judges of the tournament, and they would strike down his banner. None could tourney who had blasphemed God, or offended the ladies: he who had been false to gratitude and honour; he who had violated his word, or deserted his brother in arms in battle, was unworthy of appearing at the splendid show; and the high courtesy of chivalry was maintained by the law, that no one could tourney who had without warning assailed his enemy, or by indirect means had despoiled his territory.*

These rules, however, were not always observed; for cavaliers were often permitted to partake of chivalric sports, though they declined to name themselves to the heralds. If they were novices in arms, and not very confident in their prowess, they would conceal their names till they had won renown; and if the chance of the game were against them, the spectators knew not who had failed to acquire honour. The baron who held the tournament might be the enemy of a gallant knight, who, from prudence, would not wish to make himself known, unless he could appear with the bold front of a conqueror. Sometimes the persons of the knights were not concealed by common armour,

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 311, 323.

† The German nation, as it may be easily supposed, were more strict than other people regarding the nature of the birth-right which authorized a man to tourney. If any person be curious enough to inquire into the fantastic subtleties of German heraldy about this matter, I refer him to the Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 293, 300.

‡ M. Westm. p. 300.

* Segar of Honor, lib. ii., c. 26. Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 302. There was a singular law in Germany, prohibiting from the tournament those who had been the cause of imposing taxes or duties, or had used their endeavours to get them imposed. Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 304.

Digitized by Google

but by the guise which fancy had thrown over the fabled knights of yore. A troop of cavaliers calling themselves King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table often dashed into the lists; and their trumpet's defiance was answered by that of another band meeting them at speed from the other end, and calling themselves Charlemagne and his Paladins. This was a beautiful mode of realising the romances of chivalry. Other disguises were not equally praiseworthy; and I can only state as a historical fact, without attempting to apologise for its madness and impiety, that at a tournament held at Valladolid in the year 1428, the King of Castille was accompanied by twelve knights, who personated the twelve Apostles.*

The place of combat was the lists, a large space surrounded by ropes or railing in single or double rows. Sometimes there was a wooden division in the lists or area to prevent the horses of the adverse knights from careering against each other.† The lists were decorated with the splendid richness of feudal power. Besides the gorgeous array of heraldic insignia near the champions' tents, the galleries, which were made to contain the proud and joyous spectators, were covered with tapestry, representing chivalry both in its warlike and amorous guise: on one side the knight with his bright faulchion smiting away hosts of foes, and on the other kneeling at the feet of beauty.

The ladies were the supreme judges of tournaments; and if any complaint was raised against a knight, they adjudged the cause without appeal.‡ Generally, however, they deputed their power to a knight, who, on account of this distinction, was called the *Knight of Honour*. He bore at the end of his lance a ribbon or some other sign of woman's favour; and with this badge of power he waved the fiercest knights into order and obedience.

The heralds read to the knights the regulations of the sport, and announced the nature of the prize they were to contend for. The dames and maidens sometimes proposed jewels of price, a diamond, a ruby, and a sapphire, as rewards of valour. But the meed of renown was often more military; and the reader of Italian history remembers that at a tournament celebrated at Florence in the year 1468, Lorenzo de' Medici bore away the prize of a helmet of silver with a figure of Mars as the crest. It was the general wont of tournaments for a vanquished knight to forfeit his armour and horse to his victor.

Nothing was more beautiful than the courtesy of chivalric times. At a martial game held in Smithfield, during the reign of Richard II., the Queen proposed a crown of gold as the reward of the best jouster, were he a stranger; but if an English knight had the praise, then a rich bracelet was to be his reward. The same polite preference of strangers influenced the chivalry of England, and they promised to give to the lord of best desert, if he were a foreign knight, a fair horse, with his trappings; but if he were one of their own land, then only a falcon should reward him.

On the morning of the tournament,

> "When the day 'gan spring,
> Of horse and harneis, noise and clattering,
> Ther was in the hostelries all about."*

The knights then trooped to the listed plain, with lords, ladies and damsels, the chivalry and beauty of the country, mounted on gaily-caparisoned steeds and palfreys, whose housings swept the ground. Sometimes a lady fair led the horse of her chosen knight, and in the song of the minstrel the bridle became a golden chain of love. At the day appointed for a merry tournament, in the reign of Richard II., there issued out of the Tower of London, first, threescore coursers, apparelled for the lists, and on every one a squire of honour riding a soft pace. Then appeared threescore ladies of honour, mounted on fair palfreys, each lady leading by a chain of silver a knight sheathed in jousting har-

* Croneca del Conde D. Pero Nino, p. 203' cited in the notes to the preface to the reprint of the Morte d'Arthur, p. 61.

† Montrelet, vol. vi, p. 333.

‡ Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 323.

* Chaucer, Knight's Tale, l. 2493, &c. So Froissart says, "On the next day you might have seen in divers places of the city of London squires and varlettes going about with harness, and doing other business of their masters." Vol. ii., page 273.

Digitized by Google

ness. The fair and gallant troop, with the sound of clarions, trumpets, and other minstrelsy, rode along the streets of London,* the fronts of the housting shining with martial glory in the rich banners and tapestries which hung from the windows. They reached Smithfield,† where the Queen of England and many matrons and damsels were already seated in richly adorned galleries. The ladies that led the knights joined them; the squires of honour alighted from their coursers, and the knights in good order vaulted upon them.

This mode of conducting knights to the tournament was not the only pleasing prelude of the sports. As it was in perfect harmony with the general tone of chivalric feeling for knights to array themselves in weeds, which woman's taste had chosen or approved of, so dames and maidens, with equal courtesy, imitated in their attire the semblance of knights. They often rode to the tournament with their girdles ornamented with gold and silver, to resemble military belts, and, sportively, wielding short and light swords, embossed with emblems of love and war.

When the knights reached the lists, their arms were examined by the constable; and such as were of a frame and fabric contrary to good chivalry, were rejected. The lances were hurtless, the points being either removed altogether, or covered with broad pieces of wood, called *rockets*. The gallant manners of the age gave such lances the title of *Glaives Courtois*. The swords were blunted and rebated. Instances are on record of knights encountering with swords made of whalebone, covered with parchment, the helmet and hauberk being made of leather.

There existed very often, however, a disposition to convert tournaments into real battles. National rivalry broke through the restraints of knightly gentleness; envy of martial prowess, or of woman's love, had found an occasion of venting its passion; and, in spite of the authority of the king-at-arms and heralds to reject weapons of violence, bribery and power appear often to have introduced them. As the nature of offensive armour may be judged from the defensive harness, so in the laws of a country we may read the state of manners. The practice of converting the elegant tournament into a deadly fray occasioned an oath to be imposed on all knights that they would frequent tournaments solely to learn military exercises;* and, by a law of England made towards the close of the thirteenth century, a broad sword for tourneying was the only weapon that was allowed to the knight and squire; and there was a stern prohibition of a sword pointed, a dagger pointed, or a staff or mace. Knight-banneret and barons might be armed with mufflers, and cuishes, and shoulder plates, and a scull-cap, without more. Spectators were forbidden from wearing any armour at all, and the king-at-arms and heralds, and the minstrels, were allowed to carry only their accustomed swords without points.

The tilting armour in which knights were sheathed was generally of a light fabric, and splendid. Its ornaments came under a gentler authority than that of royal constable and marshals. If the iron front of a line of cavaliers in the battle-field was frequently gemmed with the variously coloured signs of ladies' favours, those graceful additions to armour yet more beseemed the tournament. Damsels were wont to surmount the helmets of their knights with chaplets, or to affix streamers to their spears,† and a cavalier who was thus honoured smiled with self-complacency on the highly emblazoned surcoat of his rival in chivalry.

The desire to please ladies fair formed the very soul of the tournament.‡ Every

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 173.

† Smithfield was famous many years earlier, both as the place of sports and the horse-market of London. Fitzstephen, who wrote in the time of Henry II., says, "Without one of the gates is a certain field,[a] a plain (or smooth) both in name and situation. Every Friday, except some greater festival come in the way, there is a brave sight of gallant horses to be sold: many come out of the city to buy or look on, to wit, earls, barons, knights, citizens, all resorting thither."

a Smethfield, as it were Smoothfield.

* Du Cange, Dissertation 6, on Joinville.

† Memoires d'Olivier de la Marche, liv. i., c. 14.

‡ This feeling is exceedingly well expressed in a challenge given by some foreign knights in England to the English chivalry. "Ever in courts of great kings are wont to come knights of divers nations, and more to this court of England,

Digitized by Google

young and gallant knight wore the device of his mistress, while, indeed, the hardier sons of chivalry carried fiercer signs of their own achievements: but they were unmarked by the bright judges of the tourney, for their eyes could only follow through the press their own emblems of love.

Nothing was now to be heard but the noise and clattering of horse armour.

"Ther mayst thou see devising of harneis
So uncouth,* and so rich, and wrought so welle
Of goldsmithey, of brouding,† and of stele,
The sheldes bright, testeres,‡ and trappures;
Gold hewn helms, hauberks, cote-armures;
Lords in paramentes,§ on hir courseres,
Knights of retinue, and eke squires,
Nailing the speres, and helmes buckling,
Gniding‖ of sheldes, with lainers¶ lacing;
Ther as need is they were nothing idle:
The fomy steeds on the golden bridle
Gnawing, and fast the armourers also
With file and hammer pricking to and fro;
Yeomen on foot, and communes many on,
With short staves, thick as they may gone;
Pipes, trompes, nakeres,** and clariounes,
That in the bataile blowen blody sounes."††

After the arms had been examined, "*à l'ostelle, à l'ostelle*, to achievement, knights and squires to achievement," was cried by the well-voiced heralds from side to side, and the cavaliers, making their obeisances to the ladies, retired within their tents to don their harness. At the cry, "Come forth, knights, come forth," they left their pavilions, and mounting their good steeds, stationed themselves by the side of their banners. The officers-at-arms then examined their saddles; for though they might grow unto their seats, yet it could only lawfully be done by noble horsemanship, and not by thongs attaching the man and horse together.*

The ladies and gallant spectators being fairly ranged round the lists, and the crowds of plebeian gazers being disciplined into silence and order, the heralds watched the gestures of the knight of honour, and, catching his sign that the sports might begin, they cried, "*Laissez aller.*" The cords which divided the two parties were immediately slackened, and the cavaliers dressing their spears to their rests, and commending themselves to their mistresses, dashed to the encounter, while the trumpets sounded the beautiful point of chivalry, for every man to do his devoir.†

Each knight was followed by his squires, whose number was, in England, by the ancient statute of tournaments already alluded to, limited to three. They furnished their lord with arms, arranged his harness, and raised him from the ground, if his foe had dismounted him. These squires performed also the more pleasing task of being pages of dames and damsels. They carried words of love to re-animate the courage and strength of the exhausted cavalier, and a ribbon drawn from a maiden's bosom was often sent to her chosen knight, when in the shock of spears her first favour had been torn from the place where her fair hand had fixed it.‡

---

where are maintained knighthood and feats of arms valiantly for the service of ladies in higher degrees and estates than in any realm of the world: it beseemeth well to Don Francisco de Mendoza, and Carflast De la Vega, that here, better than in any place, they may show their great desire that they have to serve their ladies." Antiquarian Repertory, vol. i., p. 148.

* Elegant. † Embroidery.
‡ Head-pieces. § Ornamented dresses.
‖ Rubbing. ¶ Straps. ** Brazen drums.
†† Chaucer, The Knight's Tale, line 2498, &c. Chaucer must have had in his imagination one of the splendid tournaments of the days of Edward III. when he wrote these spirited lines; for there is much more circumstance in his description than could have belonged to a simple joust between the two knights, Palamon and Arcite.

* Du Cange (Diss. 6), on the authority of an ancient MS. regarding tournaments; and Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 325.

† Harleian MSS. No. 69.

‡ His. de Charles VI., vol. ii., p. 120, fol. 1663. As every thing regarding the ladies of chivalric as well as of other times is interesting, no apology will be required for my hazarding a conjecture that the colour of the ribbon mentioned in the text was blue, the emblem of constancy.

"Lo, yonder folk, quoth she, that kneel in blue!
They wear the colour ay and ever shall,
In sign they were and ever will be true,
Withouten change."

Chaucer's Court of Love, l. 248, &c.

The author of the Romance of Perceforest has made a strange exaggeration of the custom of ladies sending favours to knights during the heat of a tournament. He says, that at the end of one of those martial games, "Les dames étoient si

Digitized by Google

The chivalric bands were so well poised, that one encounter seldom terminated the sport. Lances were broken, horses and knights overthrown, and the tide of victory flowed to either end of the lists. The air was rent with names of ladies. War-cries were changed for gentler invocations. Each noble knight called upon his mistress to assist him, thinking that there was a magic in beauty to sustain his strength and courage. "On, valiant knights, fair eyes behold you!" was the spirit-stirring cry of those older warriors who could now only gaze at and direct the amusements of chivalry. The poursuivants-at-arms cried at every noble achievement, "Honour to the sons of the brave!"* The minstrels echoed it in the loudest notes of their martial music, and the chivalric spectators replied by the cry, "Loyauté aux dames!"

The keen and well-practised eyes of the heralds noted the circumstances of the contest. To break a spear between the saddle and the helmet was accounted one point or degree of honour. The higher on the body the lance was attainted or broken, the greater was the consideration; and the difficulty of breaking it on the helmet was regarded as so considerable, that the knight who performed this feat was thought to be worthy of ten points. Either to strike one of the opposite party out of his saddle, or to disable him so that he could not join the next course, was an achievement that merited three points. A curious question once arose at a tournament held in Naples. A knight struck his antagonist with such violence as to disarm him of his shield, cuirass, and helmet, and in turn, he was unhorsed. The judges had some difficulty in determining who merited least reproach; and it was at length decided, quite in consonance with chivalric principles, that he who fell from his horse was most dishonoured, for good horsemanship was the first quality of a knight. Hence it was thought less dishonourable for a tourneying cavalier to fall with his horse than to fall alone. He who carried his lance comelily and firmly was more worthy of praise, although he broke not, than he who misgoverned his horse, and broke. He who ran high and sat steadily, accompanying his horse evenly and gently, was worthy of all commendation. To take away the rest of his adversary's lance merited more honour than to carry away any other part of his harness. To break his lance against the bow or pommel of the saddle was accounted greater shame than to bear a lance without breaking. It was equally dishonourable to break a lance traverse, or across the breast of an opponent, without striking him with the point; for as it could only occur from the horse swerving on one side, it showed unskilful riding.* The courtesies of chivalry were

dénues de leur atours, que la plus grande partie étoit en pur chef (mie tête) car elles s'en alloient les cheveux sur leurs epaules gisans, plus jaunes que fin or, en plus cottes sans manches, car tous avoient donné aux chevaliers pour eux parer et guimples et chaperons, manteaux et camises, manches et habits: mais quand elles se virent à tel point, elles en furent ainsi comme toutes honteuses; mais sitost qu'elles veirent que chacune étoit en tel point, elles se prirent toutes a rire de leur adventure, car elles avoient donné leurs joyaux et leurs habits de si grand cœur aux chevaliers, qu'elles ne s'appercevoient de leur dénuement et devestemens."

* The reader may wonder at this form of expression; but it proceeded from the very noble principle of teaching young knights to emulate the glories of their ancestors, and from the peculiar refinement and delicacy of chivalry which argued that there was no knight so perfect, but who might commit a fault, and so great a one as to efface the merit of all his former good deeds. Heralds, therefore, observes Monstrelet, do not at jousts and battles cry out, "Honour to the brave!" but they exclaim, "Honour to the sons of the brave!" No knight can be deemed perfect, until death has removed the possibility of his committing an offence against his knighthood. "Il n'est nul si bon chevalier au monde qu'il ne puisse bien faire une faute, voire si grande que tous les biens qu'il aura faits devant seront adnihillez; et pour ce on ne crie aux joustes ne aux batailles, aux preux, mais on crie bien aux fils des preux après la mort de leur pere car nul chevalier ne peut estre jugé preux se ce n'est après le trépassement." Monstrelet, vol. i., p. 29.

* "To break across," the phrase for bad chivalry, did not die with the lance. It was used by the writers of the Elizabethian age to express any failure of wit or argument. To the same purpose, Celia, in "As You Like It," says of Orlando, tauntingly, "O that's a brave man. He writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover, as a puny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose."

Digitized by Google

maintained by the laws that he who struck a horse, or a man, when his back was turned, or when he was unarmed, deserved no honour. Any combatant might unhelm himself, and until his helmet was replaced, none could assail him.*

When all the knights had proved their valiancy, the lord of the tournament dropped his ward,* or otherwise signed to the heralds, who cried "*Ployer vos bannieres.*" The banners were accordingly folded, and the amusements ended. The fair and noble spectators then descended from their galleries, and repaired to the place of festival. The knights who had tourneyed clad themselves in gay weeds of peace, and entering the hall amidst long and high flourishes of trumpets, sat under the silken banners whose emblazonings recorded the antique glory of their families. Favourite falcons were seated on perches above their heads, and the old and faithful dogs of the chace were allowed to be present at this joyous celebration of their master's honour. Sometimes the knights encircled, in generous equality, a round table. On other occasions the feudal long table with its dais, or raised upper end, was used; and to the bravest knights were allotted the seats which were wont to belong to proud and powerful barons.† Every preux cavalier had by his side a lady bright. The minstrels tuned their harps to the praise of courtesy and prowess; and when the merriment was most joyous, the heralds‡ presented to

* The old English ordinances, fortunately, have been preserved, and are exceedingly curious.

The ordinances, statutes, and rules, made and enacted by John Earl of Worcester, constable of England, by the kinge's commandement, at Windsor, the 14th day of May, in the seventh year of his noble reign (Edward IV.), to be observed and kept in all manner of justes of peace royal, within this realm of England, before his highness or lieutenant, by his commandement or license, had from this time forth, reserving always to the queen's highness and to the ladies there present, the attribution and gift of the price, after the manner and form accustomed, the merits and demerits attribute according to the articles following: —

First, whoso breaketh most spears as they ought to be broken, shall have the price.

Item, whoso hitteth three times in the helm shall have the price.

Item, whoso meteth two times coronel to coronel, shall have the price.

Item, whoso beareth a man down with stroke of spear shall have the price.

How the Price should be lost.

First, whoso striketh a horse shall have no price.

Item, whoso striketh a man, his back turned, or disarmed of his spear, shall have no price.

Item, whoso hitteth the toil or tilt thrice shall have no price.

Item, whoso unhelms himself twice shall have no price without his horse fail him.

How Spears broken shall be allowed.

First, whoso breaketh a spear between the saddle and the charnel of the helm shall be allowed for one.

Item, whoso breaketh a spear from the charnel upwards shall be allowed for two.

Item, whoso breaketh a spear so as he strike him down or put him out of his saddle, or disarm him in such wise as he may not run the next course, shall be allowed for three spears broken.

How Spears broken shall be disallowed.

First, whoso breaketh on the saddle shall be disallowed for a spear breaking.

Item, whoso hits the toil or tilt over shall be disallowed for two.

Item, whoso hitteth the toil twice, for the second time shall be abased three.

Item, whoso breaketh a spear within a foot of the coronall, shall be judged as no spear broken, but a good attempt.

For the Price.

First, whoso beareth a man down out of the saddle, or putteth him to the earth, horse and man, shall have the price before him that striketh coronall to coronall two times.

Item, he that striketh coronall to coronall two times shall have the price before him that striketh the sight three times.

Item, he that striketh the sight three times shall have the price before him that breaketh the most spears.

Item, if there be any man that fortunately in this wise shall be deemed he bode longest in the field helmed, and ran the fairest course, and gave the greatest strokes, helping himself best with his spear. — Antiquarian Repertory, 1. 145, &c.

* Olivier de la Marche, a hero of Burgundy in the fifteenth century, thus describes a warder: — "Et tenoit le Duc de Bourgogne un petit blanc baton en sa main pour jetter et faire séparer les champions, leurs armes achivees, comme il est de coustume en tel cas." Memoires, p. 71.

† Walsingham, p. 8. In early times, in England, those tournament festivals were held about a round table, and therefore the tournament themselves were often called round tables. Walter Hemingford, vol. i., p. 7, ed. Hearne.

‡ This was the address of the heralds after a tournament in the days of Edward IV.: —

"Oyez, oyez, oyez, we let to understand to

Digitized by Google

the ladies the knights who had worthily demeaned themselves.* She, who by the consent of her fair companions was called *La Royne de la Beaulte et des Amours*, delivered the prizes to the kneeling knights.† This queen of beauty and love addressed each of them with a speech of courtesy, thanking him for the disport and labour which he had taken that day, presenting to him the prize as the ladies' award for his skill, and concluding with the wish that such a valorous cavalier would have much joy and worship with his lady.* "The victory was entirely owing to the favour of my mistress, which I wore in my helmet," was the gallant reply of the knight; for he was always solicitous to exalt the honour of his lady-love. As tournaments were scenes of pleasure, the knight who appeared in the most handsome guise was praised; and, to complete the courtesies of chivalry, thanks were rendered to those who had travelled to the lists from far countries.†

Dancing then succeeded, the knights taking precedence agreeably to their feats of arms in the morning. And now, when every one's heart was exalted by the rich glow of chivalry, the heralds called for their rewards. Liberality was a virtue of every true knight, and the officers-at-arms were more particular in tracing the lines of his pedigree, than in checking him from overleaping the bounds of a prudent and rational generosity.

One day's amusement did not always close the tournament: but on the second morning the knights resigned the lists to their esquires, who mounted upon the horses, and wore the armour and cognisances of their lords. They also were conducted by young maidens, who possessed authority to adjudge and give the prize to the worthiest esquire. At the close of the day the festival was renewed, and the honours were awarded. On the third morning there was a melée of knights and esquires in the lists, and the judgment of the ladies was again referred to, and considered decisive.‡

Such were the general circumstances and laws of tournaments during the days of chivalry. These warlike exercises even survived their chief purpose, for they formed the delight of nations§ after

all princes and princesses, lords, ladies, and gentlewomen of this noble court, and to all others to whom it appertaineth, that the nobles that this day have exercised the feats of arms at the tilt, tourney, and barriers, have every one behaved themselves most valiantly, in showing their prowess and valour worthy of great praise.

"And to begin, as touching the brave entry of the Lord ———, made by him very gallantry, the King's Majesty more brave than he, and above all, the Earl ———, unto whom the price of a very rich ring is given by the Queen's Majesty, by the advice of other princesses, ladies and gentlewomen of this noble court.

"And as touching the valiantness of the piques, the Duke of M. hath very valiantly behaved himself, the Earl of P. better than he, and above all others, the Earl of D., unto whom the price of a ring of gold with a ruby is given by the most high and mighty Princess the Queen of England, by the advice aforesaid.

"And as touching the valiantness of the sword, ——— knight, hath very well behaved himself, the Earl of N. better than he, and Sir J. P., knight above all the rest, unto whom is given the price of a ring of gold with a diamond, by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by the advice of other princesses, ladies, and gentlewomen.

"And as touching the valiantness of the sword at the foil; Sir W. R., knight, hath very valiantly behaved himself, the Marquis of C. better than he, and above all others, the King's Majesty, unto whom was given the price of a ring of gold with a diamond, by the Queen's Majesty, by the advice of other princesses, ladies, and gentlewomen.

"Finally, touching the valiancy of the pique, the point abated, Thomas P. hath well and valiantly behaved himself, Charles C. better than he, and above all others, Z. S., unto whom was given by the Queen's Majesty a ring of gold, by the advice of other princesses, ladies, and gentlewomen.

* Knights are always mentioned as good or unskilful tilters, according to the judgment of the ladies. Froissart, vol. ii., c. 234. Monstrelet, vol. i., c. 10; and see the last note.

† The account of every tournament in our grave old chronicles warrants the sentence in the Romance of Perceforest, "Pris ne doit ne peult estre donne sans les *dames*; car pour elles sont toutes les prouesses fautes."

* This form of thanks prevailed also at the joust, as we learn from an account of one in the days of Edward IV. See Lansdowne MSS., British Museum, No. 285, art. 7.

† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 346.

‡ A tournament of the threefold description took place at St. Denys, in the year 1389.

§ The love of our ancestors for tournaments is evident in a curious passage of an ancient satirical poem, which Strutt has thus rendered:

"If wealth, Sir Knight, perchance be thine,
In tournaments you're bound to shine;
Refuse—and all the world will swear,
You die not worth a rotten pear."

Digitized by Google

the use of artillery had driven the graceful and personal prowess of chivalry from the battle-field.* In all the time of their existence they were powerfully opposed by the papal see, avowedly on the ground of humanity. There was some little excuse for this interference; for though the lances were headless, and the sword rebated, yet the shock of the career sometimes overthrew men and horses, and bruises were as deadly as the lances' wounds. The historians of the middle ages, who generally echoed the wishes of the Vatican, carefully record every instance where a life was lost in a tournament; and, perhaps, a dozen such unfortunate events are mentioned by the chroniclers of all European nations during the fourteenth century: a number exceedingly small when we reflect upon the nature of the conflict; that the time now spoken of was the very noonday of chivalry; and that not a circumstance of public joy, not a marriage among the nobles and high gentry of the land, but was celebrated by a tournament. The Vatican might thunder its denial of Christian sepulture to those who fell in a tilting ground; but still the knights would don their gorgeous harness to win the meed of noble chevisance. While learned casuists were declaring from the pulpits that they who were killed at tournaments were most assuredly damned,† heralds' trumpets in every baronial court were summoning knights and squires to gentle exercise and proof of arms; and though fanatical monks might imagine visions where knights were perishing in hell flames,‡ yet gallant cavaliers, warm and joyous with aspirations for fame and woman's love, could not be scared by such idle phantasms.

It was not, however, from any sincere considerations for humanity that the popes opposed themselves to the graceful exercises of the age; for, at the celebrated council held at Lyons in 1245, it was openly and for the first time declared, that tournaments were iniquitous, because they prevented the chivalry of Europe from joining the holy wars in Palestine. The shores of Syria might drink torrents of Christian blood, and the popes would bless the soil; but if in the course of several centuries a few unfortunate accidents happened in the lists of peace and courtesy, all the graceful amusements of Europe were to be interdicted, and the world was to be plunged into the state of barbarism from which chivalry had redeemed it. Tournaments were also interdicted on account of their expensiveness. Wealth poured forth its treasures, and art exercised its ingenuity in apparelling the barons, knights, and ladies; and even the housings of the horses were so rich as to rival the caparisons of Asiatic steeds: but the popes could see no advantage to the social state in all this gay and prodigal magnificence, and they wished that all the treasures of the West should be poured into the Holy Land.*

The joust was the other chief description of military exercises. It was so far inferior to the tournament, that he who had tourneyed, and had given largess to the heralds, might joust without further cost; but the joust did not give freedom to the tournament, nor was it the most favourite amusement, for baronial pomp was not necessary to its display, and many a joust was held without a store of ladies bright distributing the prize. There were two sorts of jousts, the *joute à l' outrance*, or the joust to the utterance, and the *joute à l'plaisance*, or joust of peace.

* Mr. Sharon Turner (History of England, vol. i., p. 144. 4to. edit.) says, that nothing could break the custom (of holding tournaments) but the increased civilization of the age. This is a mstake, for the tournaments increased in number as the world became more civilized. There were more tournaments in the fourteenth century than in the thirteenth, and even so late as the reign of Henry VIII. the whole of England seems to have been parcelled out into tilting grounds.

† "De his vero qui in torneamentis cadunt, nulla quæstion est, quin vadant ad inferos, si non fuerint adjuti beneficio contritionis." Du Cange on Joinville, Dissert. 6.

‡ Still more absurd is the story of Matthew Paris, that Roger de Toeny, a valiant knight, appeared after death to his brother Raoul, and thus addressed him: "Jam et pænas vidi malorum, et gaudio beatorum; nec non supplicia magna, quibus miser deputatus sum, oculis meis conspexi. Væ, væ mihi, quare unquam torneamenta exercui, et ea tanto studio dilexi?"

* Thus, Lambert d'Ardres writes; "Cum omnino tunc temporis propter Dominici sepulchri peregrinationem in toto orbe, interdicta fuissent torneamenta." Du Cange, Diss. 6, on Joinville.

Digitized by Google

And, first, of the serious joust. The joust to the utterance expressed a single combat between two knights, who were generally of different nations. In strictness of speech, the judicial combat was a joust *à l'outrance*, and so was every duel, whether lawful or unlawful; but with such jousts chivalry has no concern.*

In a time of peace, during the year 1398, there were sundry jousts and combats between Scots and Englishmen, for proof of their valiant activity in feats of arms, and to win fame and honour. The most remarkable encounter was that which took place between Sir David de Lindsay, first Earl of Crawford, and the Lord Wells, in the presence of Richard II. and his court. They agreed† to run certain courses on horseback, with spears sharply ground, for life or death. The place appointed for these jousts was London Bridge; the day was the feast of St. George. The doughty knights appeared sheathed in armour of proof, and mounted on mighty war-horses. They ran together with all the fierceness of mortal hate; and though they attainted. yet both kept their saddles. Lord Crawford retained his seat with such remarkable firmness that the people cried out that assuredly he was locked in his saddle. Incontinently that right noble knight leaped from his steed, and again, armed as he was, vaulted on his back, and amazed the beholders by his perfect horsemanship. The battle was renewed on foot; the skill of the Scotsman prevailed, and the life of the Lord Wells was in his power. De Lindsay now displayed the grace and courtesy of his chivalry, for he raised his foe from the ground, and presented him as a gift to the queen, wishing, like a true knight, that mercy should proceed from woman. The queen thanked the valiant and courteous Scot, and then gave liberty to the Lord Wells.*

Woman's love was as frequent a cause for a joust to the utterance as national rivalry. Many a knight would sally from a besieged town during a suspension of general hostilities, and demand whether there was any cavalier of the opposite host who, for love of his lady bright, would do any deed of arms. "Now let us see if there be any amorous among you,"† was the usual conclusion of such a challenger, as he reined in his fiery steed, and laid his spear in its rest. Such an invitation was generally accepted; but if it passed unheeded, he was permitted to return to the gates of his town; for it would not have been thought chivalric to surround and capture a cavalier who offered to peril himself in so noble a manner.

Two parties of French and English met by adventure near Cherbourg, and, like valiant knights, each desired to fight with the other. They all alighted, except Sir Launcelot of Lorrys, who sat firm and erect upon his horse, his spear in his hand, and his shield hanging from his neck. He demanded a course of jousting for his lady's sake. There were many present who right well understood him; for there were knights and squires of the English part in love as well as he was. All was bustle, and every man ran to his horse, anxious to prove his gallantry against the noble Frenchman. Sir John Copeland was the first who advanced from the press, and in a moment his well-pointed ashen lance pierced through the side of Lorrys, and wounded him to death. Every one lamented his fate, for

* Du Cange calls any combat between two knights preliminary to a general battle, a joust to the utterance. He might as well have called the battle itself a joust.

† The agreement was made in legal form, as we learn from Wynton. Sir David de Lindsay had a safe-conduct for his purpose, and came to London with a retinue of twenty-eight persons, —

"Where he and all his company
Was well arrayed, and daintily,
And all purveyed at device.
There was his purpose to win prize:
With the Lord of the Wellis he
Thought til have done there a *journée* (day's battle),
For both they were by *certane taillé*
Obliged to do there that deed, *sauf faillie* (without fail)."

Macpherson says, that challenges of this sort were called taillés indentures, because they were bonds of which duplicates were made having indentures taillés answering to each other.

* Holingshed, History of Scotland, p. 252, ed. 1587. Wynton's Cronykil of Scotland, book ix., c. 11. The Sir David de Lindsay, mentioned above, is the knight of whom Sir Walter Scott tells an amusing story in his notes to Marmion, canto i., note 8.

† "Or verra l'on s'il y a nul d'entre vous Anglois, qui soit amoureux." Froissart, vol. ii., c. 55. Lyons's edit.

Digitized by Google

he was a hardy knight, young, jolly, and right amorous;* and the death of a gallant cavalier was always lamented by his brethren in arms; for the good companionship of chivalry was superior to national distinctions.

This noble feeling of knighthood was very pleasingly displayed in a circumstance that happened in France, during the year 1380. The Duke of Brittany profited by the weakness and confusion consequent on the death of King John, and easily made his peace with the court of the new monarch. The Duke of Buckingham, uncle of Richard II. of England, had been acting as the ally of the Duke of Brittany; but now, as the war was over, he prepared to conduct most of his army home. He had been joined by some knights from Cherbourg, then an English town, and in the new martial arrangements it was agreed that they should return to their garrison; but they were not allowed to wear their harness during their march. The Constable of France, who was then at the castle of Josselyn, gave them safe-conduct. After embracing their good companions at Vannes, they mounted their palfreys, and commenced their course. An hour's riding brought them to Josselyn, and they rested awhile in the town, without the castle, intending merely to dine there, and then depart. While they were at their lodging, certain companions of the castle, knights and squires, came to see them, as was the wont of men of war, and particularly Englishmen and Frenchmen.

A French squire, named John Boucmell, discovered among the stranger band a squire called Nicholas Clifford, with whom, on former occasions, he had often exchanged looks and words of defiance. Thinking that a very fair opportunity for chevisance had presented itself, he exclaimed, "Nicholas, divers times we have wished and devised to do deeds of arms together, and now we have found each other in place and time where we may accomplish it. Let us now, in presence of the Constable of France, and other lords, have three courses on foot with sharp spears, each of us against the other."

* Froissart, i., 345.

Nicholas replied, "John, you know right well that we are now going on our way by the safe-conduct of my lord your constable. What you require of me therefore, cannot now be done, for I am not the chief of this safe-conduct, for I am but under those other knights who are here. I would willingly abide, but they will not."

The French squire replied, "You shall not excuse yourself by this means: let your company depart, if they list, for I promise you, by covenant, that when the arms are performed between you and me, I will bring you to Cherbourg without peril. Make you no doubt of that."

Nicholas answered, that he did not mean to gainsay his courtesy, but that he could not fight, as he and the rest of the English were journeying without their armour."

This objection was readily answered by the Frenchman, who proffered his own stores of harness; and Nicholas, though exceedingly indisposed to a joust, was obliged to say, that if the lords whom he accompanied would not permit the encounter there, he promised him, as soon as he arrived at Cherbourg, and was apprized of John's arrival at Boulogne, he would come to him, and deliver him of his challenge.

"Nay, nay," quoth John, "seek no respite: I have offered, and continue to offer, so many things so honourable, that you cannot depart and preserve your good name, without doing deeds of arms with me."

The Frenchmen then retired to the castle, leaving the Englishmen to dine in their lodging.

After dinner the travelling knights repaired to the castle, to require from the Constable a troop of cavaliers to conduct them through Brittany and Normandy to Cherbourg. The subject of the challenger had been much discussed by the Frenchmen, and as the execution of it appeared to be within their own power, they earnestly requested their leader to forbid the further journey of the Englishmen, while the deed of arms remained unaccomplished. The Constable received the strangers sweetly, and then, softening the harshness of his words by the chivalric courtesy of his manner, he said to them, "Sirs, I arrest you all, so

Digitized by Google

that ye shall not depart this day; and tomorrow, after mass, you shall see deeds of arms done between our squire and yours; and you shall dine with me, and after dinner you shall depart with your guides to Cherbourg."

The English were right glad to be summoned to a chivalric sport, and, after drinking of the Constable's wine, they took their leave, and returned to their lodging.

On the next morning each squire heard mass, and was confessed. They then leaped on their horses, and, with the lords of France on one part, and the Englishmen on the other, they rode all together to a fair plain, near the castle of Josselyn.

John Boucmell had prepared, according to his promise, two suits of harness, fair and good, and offered the choice to Nicholas; but the Englishman not only waved his choice, but, with still further courtesy, assisted John to arm. The Frenchman, in return, helped him to don the other suit of harness.

When they were armed they took their spears, and advanced against each other on foot, from the opposite ends of the lists. On approaching they couched their spears, and the weapon of Nicholas struck John on the breast, and, sliding under the gorget of mail, it entered his throat. The spear broke, and the iron truncheon remained in the neck. The English squire passed onwards, and sat down in his chair. The Frenchman appeared transfixed to the spot, and his companions advanced to him in alarm. They took off his helmet, and, drawing out the truncheon, the poor squire fell down dead. Grief at this event was general, but the saddest and sincerest mourners were Nicholas and the Earl of March, the former for having slain a valiant man of arms, and the other because John Boucmell had been his squire. The Constable spoke all the words of comfort to his noble friend which his kindness could prompt, and then made the knightly spectators repair to the castle, in whose hospitable hall every disposition to jealousy and revenge was discarded. After dinner the English troop bade farewell to the noble Constable, and, under the conduct of the gentle knight, the Barrois of Barres, they resumed their course to Cherbourg.*

I come to describe the joust *à plaisance*. Jousts of this friendly description often took place at the conclusion of a tournament; for a knight who had shown himself worthy of the tourneying prize caracoled his prancing steed about the lists; and, animated by the applauding smiles of dames and damsels, he called on the surrounding cavaliers by their valiancy, and for love of the ladies, to encounter him in three strokes with the lance.

More frequently jousts were held at places appointed expressly for the occasion. When they were jousts of peace, the mode of combat was always specifically described. A knight would often challenge another for love of his lady to joust three courses with a spear, three strokes with a sword, three with a dagger, and three with an axe.† It was the rule for knights to strike at each other only on the body, or within the four quarters, as the time phrased their meaning. The loss of his good name and the forfeiture of his horse and arms were the penalties of violating this usage. Sometimes the weapons were similar to those used in tournaments; but more frequently they were weapons of war;‡ and though the lances were sharp, and the bright swords were not rebated, seldom was blood shed in these jousts, so truly admirable was the military skill of the soldiers in chivalry. The tournaments are interesting in the general circumstances of their splendour and knightly gallantry; but the jousts give us a far more more curious knowledge of ancient manners.

But before I describe these martial amusements, let me call my reader's attention for a few moments to the subtlety of intellect with which questions

* Berners's Froissart, vol. i., c. 374.

† Froissart, vol. ii., c. 78.

‡ Some writers, confounding the joust with the duel, have said that bearded darts, poisoned needles, razors, and similar weapons, were lawful in the jousts. The instance to support this assertion is the challenge of the Duke of Orleans to Henry IV. of England, recorded by Monstrelet, vol. i., c. 9, where the Duke declined to use them. But Orleans challenged Lancaster to a duel, and not to a chivalric joust.

Digitized by Google

respecting the circumstances that happened at jousts were discussed.

Two gentlemen agreed to fight on horseback, and he who first fell was to be deemed the vanquished man. By the chance of battle it happened that they both fell together, and the sage spirits of chivalry were agitated by the question, who should be accounted victorious. Some thought that the defender ought to have the honour, for in all doubtful cases the challenged person should be favoured; others contended, that as the fall of the challenger might proceed from his own force, and not the virtue of the enemy, the judgment ought to lie dead: but the best and general decision was this:—if the combat were for trial of skill or love of the ladies, the challenger ought to lose the honour; but if it were for the decision of any mortal quarrel, the battle ought to be resumed some other day, because in combats of that kind no victory was gained until one of the parties were either slain or yielded himself prisoner, or had with his own mouth denied the words whereon the combat was occasioned.

On another occasion, seven knights agreed with seven of their companions to run certain courses for honour and love of the ladies. When the joust took place, five of one side acquitted themselves right chivalrously, but their two brother-tilters were overthrown. On the other side, two only performed their courses well, the rest of that company lost many lances, and ran very foul. It was then debated whether unto five well-doers and two evil, or unto two well-doers and five evil, the honour ought to be allotted. As the question did not regard the merit of any particular man, but which party in general best performed the enterprise, it was alleged that the party wherein were most well-doers ought to have the honour, notwithstanding the fall of two of their companions. This opinion was met by the acknowledged rule of arms, that the fall from horseback by the enemies' force or skill was the most reproachful chance that could happen to a knight. Therefore it was contended that the misadventure of two men only might reasonably be the loss of honour to the rest.* But further details of chivalric subtleties would afford little pleasure, and contenting myself with having shown that our ancestors' intellects were as sharp as their swords, we will progress to the tilting ground.

One of the earls of Warwick went to France dressed in weeds of peace, but carrying secretly his jousting harness. In honour of his lady he set up three shields on three pavilions, and his heralds proclaimed his challenges, apparently from three different knights, among the lords, knights, and squires of honour in France. The devices on his shields and the names he assumed were emblematical of love and war. Three skilful jousters of France on three successive days touched the shields, and the earl, dressed in different guises, overthrew them all. They now became his friends: he entertained them with chivalrique magnificence, and gave jewels of price to them all. For himself he had acquired renown, and that was all he wished; for he now could return to his lady, and showing how he had sped in his chivalric courses, could proudly claim the reward of valour.*

"Ye have heard oftentimes, it is said, how the sport of ladies and damsels encourageth the hearts of young lusty gentlemen, and causeth them to desire and seek to get honour."†

Such is Froissart's beautiful and romantic prelude to his account of a very interesting joust.

In the year 1389, the King Charles V. tarried several days at Montpellier, delighting himself with the pastime of the ladies; and the gentlemen of his court were no bad imitators of his fancy. Three cavaliers, in particular, were chiefly marked. They were the young Sir Boucicaut, Sir Raynold of Roy, and the Lord of St. Pye. Their valour was

* Segar, of Honour, lib. iii., c. 13.

* I do not know when exactly this truly chivalric circumstance occurred. The story is told in a manuscript, in the Lansdowne Collection, British Museum, No. 285. It is described as the challenge of an ancestor of the Earl of Warwick, and the MS. bears date in the days of Edward IV.

† Vous savez, et bien l'avez oui dire et recorder plusieurs fois, que les ebatemens des dames et damoiselles encouragent voulontiers les cœurs des jeunes gentils-hommes, et les elevent, en requerant, et desirant tous honneur. Froissart, vol. iv., c. 6, ed. Lyons, 1560.

Digitized by Google

inspired by gallantry, and they resolved to achieve high feats of arms in the ensuing summer; and if it had been possible for a knight to entertain any other object in his imagination, than the favour of his sovereign lady, the gallant knights of France had a very noble motive to enterprise, for some reflections had lately been cast upon their honour by an English cavalier. The noble knighthood that was in them felt a stain like a wound; and this imputation on their honour gave the form and colour to the joust they meditated; for they resolved to perform their deeds of arms in the frontier near Calais, hoping that Englishmen might be incited to meet them.

The holding of the jousts at such a place was not deemed courteous by some members of the king's council, for it was thought that the English would consider it presumptuous; and the more sage and prudent knights murmured their opinion, that it was not always right to consent to the purposes of young men, for incidents rather evil than good often sprang from them. The king, however, who was young and courageous, overruled all scruples, and ordered that the joust should proceed, because the knights had promised and sworn it before the ladies of Montpellier.

Then the king sent for the three knights into his chamber, and said to them, "Sirs, in all your doing regard wisely the honour of us and of our realm; and to maintain your estate, spare nothing, for we will not fail you for the expense of ten thousand franks."

The three knights knelt before the king, and thanked his grace. So important to the national honour was this joust considered, that the challenge was not published till it had been revised by Charles and his council.

This was its form: — "For the great desire that we have to come to the knowledge of noble gentlemen, knights, esquires, strangers, as well of the nation of France, as elsewhere of far countries, we shall be at St. Ingelbertes, in the marshes of Calais, the 20th day of the month of May next coming, and there continue thirty days complete, the Fridays only excepted, and to deliver all manner of knights and squires, gentlemen, strangers of any nation, whosoever they be, that will come thither for the breaking of five spears, either sharp or rockets, at their pleasure; and without our lodgings shall be the shields of our arms, both shields of peace and of war, and whosoever will joust, let him come or send the day before, and with a rod touch which shield he pleases. If he touch the shield of war, the next day he shall joust with which of the three he will; and if he touch the shield of peace, he shall have the jousts of peace and of war; so that whosoever shall touch any of the shields shall show their names to such as shall be then limited by us to receive them. And all such stranger-knights as will joust shall bring each some nobleman on his part who shall be instructed by us what ought to be done in this case. And we require all knights and squires, strangers that will come and joust, that they think not we do this for any pride, hatred, or evil will, but that we only do it to have their honourable company and acquaintance, which with our entire hearts we desire. None of our shields shall be covered with iron or steel, nor any of theirs that will come to joust with us, without any manner of fraud or unfair advantage, but every thing shall be ordered by them to whom shall be committed the charge of governing the jousts. And because that all gentlemen, noble knights, and squires, to whom this shall come to knowledge, should be assured of its being firm and stable, we have sealed the present writing with the seals of our arms. Written at Montpellier the twentieth day of November, in the year of our Lord God one thousand three hundred, four-score and nine, and signed thus. Raynolde du Roy — Boucicaut — St. Pye."

When this challenge was published, the knights and squires of England entertained such great imaginations to know what to do; and most of them thought it would be deeply to their blame and reproach that such an enterprise should take place near Calais, without their passing the sea. They therefore thanked the French chivalry for deporting themselves so courteously, and holding the joust so near the English marshes.

Accordingly, in the fresh and jolly month of May, when the spring was at

Digitized by Google

its finest point, the three young knights of France mounted their gay steeds, and sportively held their course from Paris to Boulogne. They then progressed to the abbey of St. Ingilbertes, and were right joyful to learn that a number of knights and squires of merry England had, like good companions, crossed the sea, and were arraying themselves for the joust. The Frenchmen raised three green pavilions, in a fair and campaign spot, between St. Ingilbertes and Calais. To the entrance of each pavilion they affixed two shields, with the arms of the knights, one shield of peace, and the other of war; and again proclaimed that such knights as would do deeds of arms should touch one of the shields, or cause it to be touched, whichever mode pleased him, and he should be delivered according to his desire.

At the day appointed for the jousts, all the respective chivalries of France and England poured from the gates of St. Ingilberte and Calais, eager for the gallant fray. Such as proposed to be mere spectators met in friendly union, without regard to national differences. The King of France was present in a disguise.* The three French knights retired within their pavilions, and squires donned their harness. The English jousters apparelled themselves, and took their station at the end of the plain, opposite the pavilions. A flourish of clarions proclaimed the commencement of the joust, and the herald's trumpet sounded to horse.

When all was hushed in breathless expectation, Sir John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon, pricked forth with the slow and stately pace of high-born chivalry, from the end of the lists which had been assigned to the English strangers. He was a right gallant cavalier, and he commanded his squire to touch the war-shield of Sir Boucicaut. Incontinently, that noble son of chivalry, ready mounted, left his pavilion with shield and spear. The knights marked each other well, and then spurred their horses to the encounter. The spear of Sir Boucicaut pierced through the shield of the English knight; but it passed hurtless over his arm, and their good steeds bounded to either end of the plain. This course was greatly commended. The second course was altogether harmless; and in the third course the horses started aside, and would not cope. The Earl of Huntingdon, who was somewhat chafed, came to his place, waiting for Sir Boucicaut taking his spear; but he did not, for he showed that he would run no more that day against the Earl, who then sent his squire to touch the war-shield of the Lord of St. Pye. He issued out of his pavilion, and took his horse, shield, and spear. When the Earl saw that he was ready, he spurred his horse, and St. Pye did not with less force urge his own good steed. They couched their spears: at the meeting their horses crossed, but with the crossing of their spears the Earl was unhelmed. He returned to his squires, and incontinently he was rehelmed. He took his spear, and St. Pye his, and they ran again, and met each other with their spears in the middle of their shields. The shock nearly hurled both to the ground, but they saved themselves by griping their horses with their legs, and returned to their places, and took breath. Sir John Holland, who had great desire to do honourably, took again his spear, and urged his horse to speed. When the Lord of St. Pye saw him coming, he dashed forth his horse to encounter him. Each of them struck the other on the helms with such force that the fire flew out. With that attaint the Lord of St. Pye was unhelmed; and so they passed forth, and came again to their own places. This course was greatly praised, and both French and English said that those three knights, the Earl of Huntingdon, Sir Boucicaut, and the Lord St. Pye, had right well done their devoirs. Again the earl desired, for love of his lady, to have another course; but he was refused, and he then mixed with the knights and spectators, and gave place to others, for he had ran all his six

* "Ye may know well that Charles the French King was sore desirous to be at those jousts: he was young and light of spirit, and glad to see new things. It was showed me that from the beginning to the ending he was there present, disguised as unknown, so that none knew him but the Lord of Garansyers, who came also with him as unknown, and every day returned to Marquise." Froissart, vol. i., c. 168.

Digitized by Google

courses well and valiantly, so that he had laud and honour of all parties.

These noble jousts continued for four days.* The gallant champions assembled after matins, and did not quit the course till the vesper-bell of the abbey summoned them to prayer. Of the noble company of knights and squires there were few who did not add something to their fame: for if a knight happened to be unhelmed, yet perhaps he did not lose his stirrups, and he was admired for sustaining a severe shock.

Such was the noble chevisance of the jousters that no mortal wound was inflicted.† The lance was the only weapon used. To unhelm the adverse knight by striking his frontlet was the chiefest feat of arms, and in the fierce career of opposing steeds, the firmest strength and the nicest skill could alone achieve it. Helms struck fire, lances were splintered, and the lance-head was lodged in the shield: but sometimes the shield resisted the lance, and men and steeds reeled back to their several pavilions.

Each gallant knight, however,

> "Grew unto his seat,
> And to such wondrous doings brought his horse
> As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
> With the brave beast."

The knighthood and squirery of England sent forth nearly forty of their host to vindicate their chivalry, and right nobly did they deport themselves against the doughtiest lances of France. There was only one knight who disgraced the order of chivalry. By birth he was a Bohemian, in station an attendant of the King of England. It was demanded of him with whom he would joust. He answered, with Boucicaut. They then prepared themselves and ran together, but the Bohemian struck a prohibited part of the armour, and he was greatly blamed that he demeaned his course so badly. By the laws of the joust he should have forfeited his arms and horse, but the Frenchman, out of courtesy to the Englishmen, forgave him. The Bohemian to redeem his shame required again to joust one course. He was demanded against whom he would run; and he sent to touch the shield of Sir Raynolde du Roy. That gallant knight was not long before he answered him. They met in the middle of their shields, and the French cavalier struck his antagonist from his horse; and the Englishmen were not displeased that he was overthrown, because he had ran the first course so ungoodly.

This Sir Raynolde du Roy was one of the best jousters in all the realm of France, and no wonder; for our faithful and gallant chronicler reports that he lived in love with a young maiden, which availed him much in all his affairs.*

* As the weather was bright, according to Froissart, I wonder he did not, in his fondness for detail, mention the number of barrels of water that were every evening poured on the dusty plain. On one occasion he says, "The knights complained of the dust, so that some of them said they lost their deeds by reason thereof. The King made provision for it: he ordained more than two hundred barrels of water that watered the place, whereby the ground was well amended, and yet the next day they had dust enough, and too much." vol. ii., p. 157.

† Du Cange (Dissertation 7, on Joinville) is incorrect in saying that a joust seldom terminated without some knights being slain, or very grievously wounded. The jousts at St. Ingilberte were on the most extensive scale, and nothing worse than a flesh-wound or a bruise from falling was felt, even by the most unskilful or unlucky knight. Froissart perpetually described jousts of three courses with lances, three strokes with axes, three encounters both with swords and daggers; and generally concludes with saying, "And when all was done, there was none of them hurt." "You should have jousted more courteously," was the reproach of the spectators to a knight, when his lance had pierced the shoulders of the other jouster. Froissart, vol. ii., c. 161. Du Cange preserved no clear idea in his mind of the difference between the joust *à la plaisance* and the joust *à l'outrance*, and most subsequent writers have only blindly followed them. I shall notice in this place another popular error on the subject of jousts. Mr. Strutt (Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, book iii., c. 1), and a hundred writers after him, assert that the authority of the ladies was more extensive in the joust than in the tournament. Mr. Strutt says, that "in the days of chivalry jousts were made in honour of the ladies, who presided as judges paramount over the sports." Now there are many jousts mentioned in Froissart and other chivalric historians that were held only in the presence of knights. But I can find no instance of a tournament being held without ladies. The joust was a martial exercise; but the tournament was connected with all the circumstances of domestic life.

* "Et si aimoit, par amour, jeune dame:

Digitized by Google

One of his most valiant antagonists was a gentle knight of England, young and fresh, a jolly dancer and singer, called Sir John Arundell. At the first course they met rudely, and struck each other on the shields, but they held themselves without falling, and passed forth their course. The second course they struck each other on the helms; the third course they crossed and lost their staves; the fourth course resembled the second; the fifth course they splintered their spears against their shields, and then Sir John Arundell ran no more that day.

At the conclusion of the joust the Earl of Hutingdon, and the Earl Marshal, and the Lord Clifford, the Lord Beaumont, Sir John Clinton, Sir John Dambreticourt, Sir Peter Sherborne, and all other knights that had jousted those four days with the French knights, thanked them greatly for their pastime, and said, "Sirs, all such as would joust of our party have accomplished their desires; therefore now we will take leave of you: we will return to Calais, and so cross to England; and we know that whoever will joust with you will find you here these thirty days, according to the tenor of your challenge."

The French knights were grateful for this courtesy, saying, that all new comers should be right heartily welcome; "and we will deliver them according to the rights of arms, as we have done you; and, moreover, we thank you for the grace and gallantry that you have shown to us."

Thus in knightly manner the Englishmen departed from St. Inglebertes, and rode to Calais, where they tarried not long, for the Saturday afterwards they took shipping and sailed to Dover, and reached that place by noon. On the Sunday they progressed to Rochester, and the next day to London, whence every man returned to his home.

The three French knights remained the thirty days at Saint Inglebertes, but no more Englishmen crossed the sea to do any deeds of arms with them.*

Perhaps the most interesting joust in the middle ages was that which was held between Lord Scales, brother of the Queen of Edward the Fourth, and the Bastard of Burgundy. Many of the circumstances which attended it are truly chivalric.*

On the 17th of April, 1465, the Queen and some ladies of her court, in a mood of harmless merriment, attached a collar of gold, enamelled with the rich floure of souvenance,† to the thigh of that right

dont en tous estats son affaire en valoit grandement mieux." Froissart, vol. iii., c. 12, edit. Lyons, 1560.

* Froissart, vol. li., c. 160, 162, 168. Memoires du Mareschal de Boucicaut, partie i., c. 17. The writer of those memoirs, a contemporary of Boucicaut's, in his zeal for his hero, gives all the honour to the French knights. Juvenal des Ursins (p. 83, &c.) is more modest, and he makes certain judges of the court compliment many of the knights for their valiancy.

* Most of these circumstances are unnoticed by our historians. I can pardon their unacquaintance with the Lansdowne manuscripts, for those are but recently acquired national treasures: but every scholar is supposed to know the Biographia Britannica,— and in the article Caxton, some of the chivalric features of the joust in question are mentioned.

† A very amusing little volume might be made on the romance of flowers, on the tales which poetry and fancy have invented to associate the affections and the mind with plants, thus adding the pleasures of the feelings and the imagination to those of the eye. The reader remembers the Love in Idleness, in Shakspeare's Midsummer Night's Dream. The Floure of Souvenance, the Forget-me-not, is an equally pleasing instance. The application of the name to the Myosotis Scorpioidis of botanists is of considerable antiquity: the story in the text proves that the plant with its romantic associations was known in England as early as the days of our Edward IV. The following tale of the origin of the fanciful name has been communicated to me by my friend Anthony Todd Thomson, whose Lectures on the Elements of Botany, at once scientific and popular, profound and elegant, take a high place in the class of our most valuable works.

"Two lovers were loitering on the margin of a lake, on a fine summer's evening, when the maiden espied some of the flowers of Myosotis growing on the water, close to the bank of an island, at some distance from the shore. She expressed a desire to possess them, when her knight, in the true spirit of chivalry, plunged into the water, and, swimming to the spot, cropped the wished-for plant, but his strength was unable to fulfil the object of his achievement, and feeling that he could not regain the shore, although very near it, he threw the flowers upon the bank, and casting a last affectionate look upon his lady-love, he cried, 'Forget-me-not,' and was buried in the waters."

"There are three varieties of the plant," Mr. Thomson adds; "the one to which the tradition of the name is attached is perennial, and grows in marshes and on the margins of the lakes."

Digitized by Google

worshipful and amorous knight, Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales, for an emprise of arms on horseback and on foot.* The most renowned cavalier at that time was the Bastard of Burgundy, and accordingly Lord Scales addressed him in courteous wise, praising his prowess, and vowing before God and the ladies that his own great desire was to rival his fame. In order, then, that there might exist that love and fraternity between them which became knights of worship, he related the goodly adventure at the court of England, and requiring the Bastard, in all affection for the honour of chivalry, to do him so much favour as to discharge him of his bond. The Earl of Worcester, Lord High Constable of England, certified the fact of the delivery of the floure of souvenance to the Lord Scales, and the King's permission for his herald to cross the seas to Burgundy.

The Bastard received the letter on the last day of April, and with permission of his father, the Duke of Burgundy, he consented to assist the Lord Scales in accomplishing his emprise. Lord Scales and the court of England were right joyous and grateful at the news, and Edward granted a safe-conduct to the adventurous Burgundian, the Earl of Roche, and a thousand persons in his company, to come into England, to perform certain feats of arms with his dearly beloved brother Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales, and Nucelles.†

The Bastard accordingly set sail for England, nobly accompanied by four hundred of his father's prowest chivalry. By Edward's command, Garter king-at-arms met him at Gravesend. The gallant squadron sailed towards London, and at Blackwall it was joined by the Earl of Worcester, attended by a noble troop of lords, knights, and squires, and also by many of the aldermen and rich citizens of London. The Lord of Burgundy landed at Billingsgate, and was welcomed by another party of the nobility and trades of England, (so general was the interest of the expected joust,) who conducted him on horseback through Cornhill and Cheap to the palace of the Bishop of Salisbury in Fleet Street, which royal courtesy had appointed for his abode. Lord Scales soon afterwards came to London, attended by the nobility and chivalry of his house, and the King assigned him the palace of the Bishop of Ely in Holborn for his residence. The noble stranger was introduced to Edward on his coming to London from Kingston, in order to open the parliament.

The ceremonies of the joust were then arranged by well experienced knights, and strong lists were erected in Smithfield, one hundred and twenty yards and ten feet long, eighty yards and ten feet broad, with fair and costly galleries around. On the morning appointed for the gallant show, the King and Queen, with all the chivalry and beauty of the land, repaired to Smithfield. The King sat under a richly canopied throne, at one end of the lists; on each side were lords and ladies, and underneath him were ranged the knights, the squires, and the archers of his train. The city magistrates then appeared; the lord mayor bowing, and the mace-bearer lowering his sign of authority, as they passed the King in their procession to the other end of the lists, where scaffolds of similar form, but inferior magnificence to the royal chambers, were erected for them. The eight guards of the lists entered on horseback, and received their charge from the Earl Marshal and Lord High Constable of England, who gently paced their horses to and fro beneath the throne.

When every thing was fairly arranged, Lord Scales appeared at the gate of the lists. At the sound of his trumpet the Constable advanced and demanded his purpose. The young lord, with the grace and modesty of chivalry, replied, that he solicited the honour of presenting himself before his sovereign liege the King, in order to accomplish his arms against the Bastard of Burgundy. The gate was then thrown open by command of the Constable, and the Lord Scales entered the lists, followed by nine noblemen on horseback, bearing parts of

* The Lord Scales was a good knight of worship, in spite of the reflections on his courage which Edward IV. once threw out against him. "The kyng hathe sayd of hym that even wyr he hathe most to do, then the Lord Scalys wyll soonest axe leve to depart, and the kyng weenyth that it is mist because of kowardyese." Paston Letters, vol. iv., p. 116.

† Rymer, Fœdera, tom. ii., p. 573.

Digitized by Google

his harness and arms, and nine pages riding on gaily caparisoned steeds. They advanced to the King, and after having made their obeisances, they retired to a pavilion at one end of the lists.

With similar forms the Lord of Burgundy, attended by the chosen chivalry of his country, approached the King, and then repaired to his tent.

The heralds commanded silence, and forbad any one, by the severest penalties, from intermeddling with the jousters. Two lances and two swords were taken to the King, who, being satisfied of their fitness, commanded the lords who bore them to take them to the combatants. The stranger-knight made his election, and dressed his lance to its rest. Lord Scales prepared himself with equal gallantry, and they dashed to the encounter. Their spears were sharp; but so perfect was their knowledge of chivalry, that no wounds were inflicted. The nicest judges could mark no difference of skill, and the noble knights jousted their courses, when the King dropped his warder, and the amusements ended.

The next day the court and city repaired to Smithfield, with their accustomed pomp, and the spectacle was varied by the jousters contending with swords. The sports were, however, untimely closed by the steed of Lord Scales with the spike of his chaffron overthrowing the Bastard of Burgundy and his horse; and the King would not allow the tourney to proceed, though the bruised knight gallantly asserted his wish not to fail his encounter companion.

Not wearied by two days' amusement, the chivalry and beauty of England assembled in the lists of Smithfield on the third morning. The noblemen now fought on foot with pole-axes. At last the point of Lord Scales's weapon entered the sight of the Burgundian's helmet, and there was a feeling of fear through the galleries that a joust of peace would have a fatal termination. But before it could be seen whether Lord Scales meant to press his advantage, the King dropped his warder, and the Marshals separated them. The Bastard of Burgundy prayed for leave to continue his enterprise; and the Lord Scales consented. But the matter was debated by the assembled chivalry; and it was declared by the Earl of Worcester, then Constable of England, and the Duke of Norfolk the Marshal, that if the affair were to proceed, the knight of Burgundy must, by the law of arms, be delivered to his adversary in the same state and condition as he was in when they were separated. This sentence was a virtual prohibition of the continuance of the joust, and the Bastard therefore relinquished his challenge. The herald's trumpet then sounded the well known point of chivalry that the sports were over; but as the times were joyous as well as martial, the knights and ladies before they parted held a noble festival at Mercer's Hall.*

The feats of arms at St. Ingilbertes displayed the martial character of the joust; and the emprise of Lord Scales shows how beautifully love could blend itself with images of war, and the interest which a whole nation could take in the circumstance of certain fair ladies of a court binding round the thigh of a gal-

* Besides Holingshed, Stow, and other chroniclers, I have consulted for this very interesting joust a curious collection of contemporary documents, among the Lansdowne manuscripts (No. 285) in the British Museum. The Chevalier de la Marche accompanied the Bastard of Burgundy to England, and his Memoirs furnish a few particulars not noticed by English writers. His account of the joust itself differs from that of our chroniclers, (whom I have followed,) for he makes all the advantage lie with his own knight. It is neither impossible nor important to discover the truth. The spirit of the age which gave birth to the challenge and the general interest excited by the joust are the points that deserve to be marked. There is also much confusion regarding the dates of most of the circumstances, and I hold my readers in too much respect to enter into any arguments touching such trifling matters. Such few dates as are undoubted I have mentioned. Let me add Hawkin's conjecture (Origin of the English Drama, vol. iii., p. 91), that the word *Burgullian* or Burgonian meaning a bully, a braggadochio, was derived from this joust. This is by no means unlikely, observes Mr. Gifford, (note on Every Man in his Humour, act iv., sc. 2,) for our ancestors, who were not over delicate, nor, generally speaking, much overburdened with respect for the feelings of foreigners, had a number of vituperative appellations derived from their real or supposed ill qualities, of many of which the precise import cannot now be ascertained.

Digitized by Google

lant knight a collar of gold, enamelled with a floure of souvenance.

But the high romantic feeling of chivalric times is, perhaps, still more strikingly displayed in the following tale. In the beginning of the year 1400, an esquire of Spain, named Michel d'Orris, being full of valour and love, attached a piece of iron to his leg, and vowed that he would endure the pain till he had won renown by deeds of chivalry. The prowess of the English knights most keenly excited his emulation; and, as his first measure to cope with it, he journeyed from Arragon to Paris. He then issued his defiance to the English chivalry at Calais, to perform exercises on foot with the battle-axe, the sword and the dagger, and to run certain courses on horseback with a lance.

A noble soldier, hight Sir John Prendergast, a companion of Lord Somerset, governor of Calais, being equally desirous to gain honour and amusement, like a gentleman, to the utmost of his power, accepted the challenge in the name of God, of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of his lords Saint George and Saint Anthony. Like a true brother in chivalry, he expressed his wish to relieve the Arragonian esquire from the pain he was suffering; and, agreeably to the nobleness and modesty of his profession, he avowed his joy at the occasion of making acquaintance with some of the French nobility,* and learning from them the honourable exercise of arms; and then, in a fine strain of gallantry, he concludes his acceptance of the challenge by praying that the Author of all good would grant the gentle esquire joy, honour, and pleasure, and every description of happiness to the lady of his affection, to whom Sir John Prendergast entreated that those letters might recommend him.

Political affairs recalled Orris to Arragon, and the English knight, not knowing that circumstance, wrote to him at Paris, pressing the performance of the emprise, reminding him how much his honour was concerned in the matter, and entreating Cupid, the god of love, as Orris might desire the affections of his lady, to urge him to hasten his journey.* No answer was returned to this heart-stirring epistle; and, after waiting several months, Prendergast again addressed Orris, expressing his astonishment that the challenge had not been prosecuted, and no reason rendered for the neglect by the valiant esquire. He was ignorant if the god of love, who had inspired him with courage to undertake the emprise, had since been displeased, and changed his ancient pleasures, which formerly consisted in urging on deeds of arms, and in promoting the delights of chivalry. He was wont to keep the nobles of his court under such good government, that, to add to their honour, after having undertaken any deeds of arms, they could not absent themselves from the country where such enterprise was to be performed, until it was perfectly accomplished. Anxious to preserve the favour of the god of love, and from respect to the ladies, Sir John Prendergast was still ready, with the aid of God, of Saint George, and Saint Anthony, to deliver him whom he still hoped was the servant of Cupid; and unless within a short time the emprise was accomplished, he intended to return to England, where he hoped that knights and esquires would bear witness that he had not misbehaved towards the god of love, to whom he recommended his own lady and the lady of Orris.†

* Prendergast mistook Orris for a French knight. Orris afterwards refused the honour intended him, expressing, however, very high compliments to the chivalry of France, and merely stating his Arragonese descent, on the ground, that no honest man ought to deny his country.

* "Si prie au dieu d'amour qu'ainsi comme vous desirez l'amour de ma dame la vostre, il ne vous l'ait de vostre dicte venue." Monstrelet, vol. i., p. 3, ed. 1573.

† Lest it should be thought that I am drawing from a romance, I subjoin part of the original letter from the grave old chronicler Monstrelet. "Je ne scay se le dieu d'amours qui vous enhorta et meit en couraige de vosdictes, lettres quand les envoyes, ait en aucune chose esté si despleu: parquoy il ait changé ses conditions anciennes, qui souloient estre telles que pour esbaudir armes et à cognoistre chevalerie. Il tenoit les nobles de sa court en si royalle gouvernance, que pour accroissement de leur honneur, apres ce qu'ils avoient fait leur dicte emprise, jusques à tant que fin en fut faicte: ne aussi ne faisoient leurs compagnons frayer, travailler, ne despendre leurs biens en vain. Non pourtant que n'y voudroye pas qu'il trouvast celle deffaute en moy, si qu'il eut cause de moy bannir de sa court. Je vueil encores demourer par deça jusques au huictiesme jour de ce present

Digitized by Google

The esquire returned to Paris, after he had finished his military duties in Arragon, still wearing the painful badge of iron. He found at Paris all the letters of Prendergast. His chivalric pride was wounded at the thought that the god of love had banished him from his court, and made him change his mind; and he informed his noble foe that assuredly, without any dissembling, he should never, in regard to the present emprise, change his mind, so long as God might preserve his life; nor had there ever been any of his family who had not always acted in such wise as became honest men and gentlemen.

Notwithstanding the appeal of Orris to the chivalry of Prendergast no deeds of arms were achieved. The delay of answers to his letters had offended the English knight, and some misunderstanding regarding the petty arrangements of the joust abruptly terminated the affair.*

A very favourite description of joust was that which was called a passage of arms. A knight and his companions proclaimed that they would on a certain day guard a particular road or bridge from all persons of cavaleresque rank, who attempted to pass.† Those who undertook such an emprise had their arms attached to pillars at the end of the lists with some plain shields of different colours, in which were marked the nature of the adventure, and the description of arms that were to be employed, so that he, who repaired to the passage, with the design of trying his skill, chose his mode of combat by touching one of the shields whereon it was specified. Officers at arms were in waiting to collect and register the names of such as touch the different shields, that they might be called out in the rotation of their first appearance.

In the spring of the year 1443, the Lord of Chargny, a noble knight of the court of Burgundy, made known to all princes, barons, cavaliers, and esquires without reproach, that, for the augmentation and extension of the most noble profession and exercise of arms, it was his will and intention, in conjunction with twelve knights, squires, and gentlemen, of four quarterings, whose names he mentioned, to guard and defend a pass d'armes, situated on the great road leading from Dijon toward Exonne, at the end of the causeway from the said town of Dijon, at a great tree called the Hermit's Tree, or the Tree of Charlemagne. He proposed to suspend on the tree two shields, (one black, besprinkled with tears of gold, the other violet, having tears of sable,) and all those who by a king at arms or pursuivant should touch the first shield should be bounden to perform twelve courses on horseback, with him the Lord of Chargny, or one of his knights and squires, with blunted lances; and if either of the champions, during their twelve courses, should be unhorsed by a direct blow with the lance on his armour, such person so unhorsed should present to his adversary a diamond of whatever value he pleased. Those princes, barons, knights, and esquires, who should rather take their pleasure in performing feats of arms on foot, were to touch the violet shield, and should perform fifteen courses with battle-axes or swords, as might be most

mois de May preste a l'ayde de Dieu, de St. George, et de St. Anthoine à vous deliverir, ainsi que ma dame et la vostre le puissent scavoir que pour reverence d'icelles j'ai voulenté de vous aiser de vostre griefue: qui par long temps vous a desaisié comme vosdictes lettres contiennent: pourquoy aussi vous avez cause de desirer vostre allegeance. Apres le quel temps se venir ne voulez, je pense au plaisir de Dieu de m'enretourner en Angleterre par devers nos dames: ausquelles j'ai espai en Dieu que sera tesgmoigné par chevaliers et escuyers que je n'ai en riens mesprins envers le dit dieu d'amours: le quel vueille avoir lesdits madame et la vostre pour recommandées, sans avoir desplaisir envers elles pour quelque course qui soit advenue."

* Monstrelet, vol. i., c. 1.

† The phrase, the passage of arms, is used in the romance of Ivanhoe as a general expression for chivalric games. But this is incorrect; for the defence of a particular spot was the essential and distinguishing quality of the exercise in question. Now there was no such circumstance in the affair near Ashby-de-la-Zouche. Five knights challengers undertook to answer all comers, but it was not expected that those comers should attempt to pass any particular place. The encounters which were the consequences of the challenges were simple jousts, and constituted the first day's sports; on the second day there was a general tourney or mêlée of knights, and as in chivalric times the tournament was always regarded as the chief military exercise, the amusements at Ashby-de-la-Zouche were a tournament, and by that name, indeed, the author of Ivanhoe has sometimes called them.

Digitized by Google

agreeable to them, and if during those courses any champion should touch the ground with his hand or knees he should be obliged to present to his adversary a ruby of whatever value he pleased.

The Lord of Chargny was a right modest as well as a valiant knight, for he besought all princes, barons, knights, and esquires, not to construe his intention as the result of pride and presumption, for he assured them that his sole motive was to exalt the noble profession of arms, and also to make acquaintance by chivalric deeds with such renowned and valiant princes and nobles as might be pleased to honour him with their presence.

For the forty days that followed the first of July, the passage of arms lasted, and right nobly did the Burgundian chivalry comport themselves. Their most skilful opponent was a valiant knight of Spain, hignt Messire Pierre Vasque de Suavedra, with whom the Lord of Chargny jousted on horseback and on foot, and the nicest eye of criticism could not determine which was the doughtiest knight. At the conclusion of the joust the cavaliers repaired to the church of our Lady at Dijon, and on their knees offered the shields to the Virgin.*

Such were the martial amusements and exercises of preux chevaliers. All the noble and graceful virtues of chivalry were reflected in the tournament and joust, and the warrior who had displayed them in the lists could not but feel their mild and beneficent influence even in the battle-field. He pricked on the plain with knightly grace as if his lady-mistress had been beholding him: skill and address insensibly softened the ferocity of the mere soldier, and he soon came to consider war itself only as a great tournament. Thus the tourneying lists were schools of chivalric virtue as well as chivalric prowess, while the splendour and joyousness of the show brought all classes of society into kind and merry intercourse.

* The challenge of the Lord of Chargny is contained in Monstrelet, vol. viii., c. 60, 61. The description of the passage of arms is given by Olivier de la Marche in his Mémoires, c. 9. There are many other passages of arms recorded in the histories of the middle ages, but there is only one of them of interest, and it will find a place in my description of the progress of chivalry in Spain.

Through the long period of the middle ages tournaments were the elegant pastimes of Europe, and not of Europe only, but of Greece; and knighthood had its triumph over classical institutions when the games of chivalry were played in the circus of Constantinople. The Byzantines learnt them from the early Crusaders; and when the French and Venetians in the twelfth century became masters of the East, chivalric amusements were the common pastimes of the people, and continued so even when the Greeks recovered the throne of their ancestors; nor were they abolished until the Mussulmans captured Constantinople, and swept away every Christian and chivalric feature.*

In the West the tournament and joust survived chivalry itself, whose image they had reflected and brightened, for changes in the military art did not immediately affect manners; and the world long clung with fondness to those splendid and graceful shows which had thrown light and elegance over the warriors and dames of yore.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RELIGIOUS AND MILITARY ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

General Principles of the Religious Orders.—Qualifications for them.—Use of these Orders to Palestine.—Modern History of the Knights Templars.—Their present Existence and State.—Religious Orders in Spain.—That of St. James.—Its Objects.—Change of its Objects.—Order of Calatrava.—Fine Chivalry of a Monk.—Fame of this Order.—Order of Alcantara.—Knights of the Lady of Mercy.—Knights of St. Michael.—Military Orders.—Imitations of the Religious Orders.—Instances in the Order of the Garter.—Few of the present Orders are of Chivalric Origin.—Order of the Bath.—Dormant Orders.—Order of the Band.—Its singular Rules.—Its noble Enforcement of Chivalric Duties towards Woman.—Order of Bourbon.—Strange Titles of Orders.—Fabulous Orders.—The Round Table.—Sir Launcelot.—Sir Gawain.—Order of the Stocking.—Origin of the Phrase Blue Stocking.

Such were the institutions by which the character of the true knight was

* Nicetas, Hist. Byzant. l, iii., c. 3. Johannes Cantacuzenus, l, i., c. 42.

Digitized by Google

formed; and we might now resume our historical course did not a matter of considerable interest detain us, which, as it belongs to chivalry in general, and not entirely to any state in particular, can no where be treated with so much propriety as in this place.

It has been shown that from the union of religion and arms chivalry arose, and that the defence of the church and the promoting of its interests were among the chief objects of the new system of principles and manners. But knighthood had various duties to discharge, and the cavalier, who was sometimes distracted by their number, consecrated his life to the single purpose of upholding the cross of Christ. Thus orders called the Religious Orders of Knighthood were founded, and in imitation of them, fraternities, called Military Orders, appeared, all being ranged within the general pale of chivalry.

The religious orders, as might be expected, were sanctioned by papal authority. They were both martial and monastic in their general principles, but their internal conduct was entirely regulated by the discipline of the cloister; and, like the establishments of monks, they took some existing rule of a favourite saint as their guide. Theirs was a singular compound of the chivalric and the cloisterial characters,

> "The fine vocation of the sword and lance
> With the gross aims and body-bending toil
> Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
> Pitied." WORDSWORTH.

Like the monks they were bound by the three great monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The first of these matters needs no explanation;* the second meant a total oblivion of individuality, the community and not a peculiar possession of property; and by the third, the members were confined to obey the head of their order, to the exclusion of all other authority. These general principles of the religious societies of knighthood gave way, however, and fitted themselves to the occasions and demands of society, for like the chain-mail, which was flexible to all the motions of the body, the orders of chivalry have varied with every change of European life. Ascetic privations gave place to chivalric gallantry, the vow of chastity was mitigated into a vow of connubial fidelity; and when men of noble birth and high fortune became knights of the holy and valiant societies of Saint John, the Temple, or Saint James, the vow of poverty was dispensed with, or explained away to the satisfaction of conscientious scruples. In the fraternity of the Temple a knight was permitted to hold estates, so that at his death he bequeathed some portion of them to his order.*

In another very important respect, the religious brotherhoods were moulded to the general frame of political society. Their independence of civil authority was given up, as the papal power declined, and kings refused admittance of the bulls of Rome into their states without their previous license. The knights of the religious fraternities became connected with the state by professing that their duties to God and their country were prior and paramount to the rules and statutes of the brotherhood; and they adopted this form of phrase rather to prevent the suggestions of malice than from any existing necessity, for they contended that the obligations of chivalry, instead of contravening the duty of a

* I may observe, however, that the ancient Templars were so dreadfully afraid of their virtue, that they forbad themselves the pleasure of looking in a fair woman's face; at least the statutes attempted to put down the instinct of nature. No brother of the Temple was permitted to kiss maid, wife, or widow, his sister, mother, or any relation whatever. The statute gravely adds, that it behoves the knights of Jesus Christ to avoid the kisses of women, in order that they may always walk with a pure conscience before the Lord. I shall transcribe the statute in the original Latin, and I hope that it will not be perused with that levity which an allusion to it during Rebecca's trial at Templestowe excited in the younger members of the valiant and venerable order of the Temple. The title is sufficiently ascetic, — Ut omnium mulierum oscula fugiantur. It proceeds thus: — "Periculosum esse credimus omni religioni, vultum mulierum nimis attendere, et ideo nec viduam, nec virginem, nec matrem, nec sororem, nec amitam, nec ullam aliam fœminam aliquis frater osculari præsumat. Fugiat ergo fœminea oscula Christi Militia, par quæ solent homines sæpe periclitari, ut pura conscientia, et secura vita, in conspectu Domini perenniter valeat conversare. Cap. 72.

* Statutes, c. 51, 55.

Digitized by Google

citizen, gave it strength, and dignity, and grace.*

In their origin, all the military orders and most of the religious ones were entirely aristocratic; proofs of gentility of birth were scrupulously examined; and no soldier by the mere force of his valiancy could attain the honors of an order, though such a claim was allowed for his admission into the general fraternity of knighthood. These requisites for nobleness of birth kept pace with the political state of different countries, for the sovereigns of Europe and chivalry did not accord upon any particular form. Thus a French candidate for the knighthood of Saint John of Jerusalem must have shown four quarters of gentility on his coat-armour, but in the severer aristocracies of Spain and Germany no less than eight heraldic emblazonings were requisite. In Italy, however, where commerce checked the haughtiness of nobility, it was not expected that the pedigree should be so proud and full, and at length the old families conceded, and the new families were satisfied with the concession, that the sons of merchants should be at liberty to enter into the religious order.

It would be tedious and unprofitable to detail the history of all these chivalric societies; and were I to repeat or abridge the usual books on the topic I should in many cases be only assisting to give currency to fraud, for the title, a religious order of knighthood, was often improperly bestowed on an establishment, while in truth it was only a fraternity of monks who maintained some soldiers in their pay: other associations obtained a papal sanction, but they were small and insignificant, and their history did not affect the general state of any country.

Not so, however, the noble fraternities of Saint John and the Temple,† and next, though the intervening space of dignity was considerable, the Teutonic knights. These religious orders of chivalry by their principles and conduct are strongly marked in the political history of the world, for they formed the firm and unceasing bulwark of the Christian kingdom in Palestine during the middle ages. They were its regular militia, and maintained the Holy Land in the interval between the departure of one fleet of crusaders and the arrival of another. Generous emulation sometimes degenerated into envy, and the heats and feuds of the knights of Saint John and the Temple violated the peace of the country; but these dissensions were usually hushed when danger approached their charge, and the atabal of the Muselmans was seldom sounded in defiance on the frontier of the kingdom without the trumpets of the military orders in every preceptory and commandery receiving and echoing the challenge.

The valiancy of the Templars was particularly conspicuous in the moments of the kingdom's final fate; for when the Christians of the Holy Land were reduced to the possession of Acre, and two hundred thousand Mameluke Tartars from Egypt were encamped round its walls, the defence of the city was entrusted to Peter de Beaujeau, Grand Master of the Templars. And well and chivalrously did he sustain his high and sacred charge. Acre fell, indeed, but not until this heroic representative of Christian chivalry and most of the noble followers of his standard had been slain. The memory of the Templars is embalmed in all our recollections of the beautiful romance of the middle ages, for the red cross knights were the last band of Europe's host that contended for the possession of Palestine. A few survived the fall of Acre and retired to Sis in Armenia. They were driven to the island of Tortosa, whence they escaped to Cyprus, and the southern shores of the Mediterranean no longer rang with the cry of religious war.

The origin and peculiar nature of these

* "I was a Scotsman ere I was a Templar," is the assertion of Vipont in the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill, — a sentiment confessedly borrowed from the story of the Venetian General, who, observing that his soldiers testified some unwillingness to fight against those of the Pope which they regarded as father of the church, addressed them in terms of similar encouragement: — "Fight on — we were Venetians before we were Christians."

† The Templars find no favour in the eyes of the author of Ivanhoe, and Tales of the Crusaders. He has imbibed all the vulgar prejudices against the order; and when he wants a villain to form the shadow of his scene, he as regularly and unscrupulously resorts to the fraternity of the Temple, as other novelists refer to the church, or to Italy, for a similar purpose.

Digitized by Google

three great religious orders have been detailed by me in another work, and also their history as far as it was connected with the crusades; but on one subject our present deductions may be carried further: for though the annals of the cavaliers of Saint John and also of the Teutonic knights are mixed with general European history, yet those of the Templars stand isolated. In the History of the Crusades, I described the circumstances of the iniquitous and sanguinary persecution of the brotherhood of the Temple, the consequent suspension of their functions,* and the spoliation of all those possessions with which the respect of the world had enriched them.

But the persecution of the Templars in the fourteenth century does not close the history of the order, for though the knights were spoliated the order was not annihilated. In truth, the cavaliers were not guilty, the brotherhood was not suppressed, and, startling as is the assertion, there has been a succession of Knights Templars from the twelfth century down even to these days; the chain of transmission is perfect in all its links. Jacques de Molai, the Grand Master at the time of the persecution, anticipating his own martyrdom, appointed as his successor, in power and dignity, Johannes Marcus Larmenius of Jerusalem, and from that time to the present there has been a regular and uninterrupted line of grand masters. The charter by which the supreme authority has been transmitted is judicial and conclusive evidence of the order's continued existence. This charter of transmission, with signatures of the various chiefs of the Temple, is preserved at Paris, with the ancient statutes of the order, the rituals, the records, the seals, the standards, and other memorials of the early Templars. The brotherhood has been headed by the bravest cavaliers of France, by men who, jealous of the dignity of knighthood, would admit no corruption, no base copies of the orders of chivalry, and who thought that the shield of their nobility was enriched by the impress of the Templars' red cross. Bertrand du Guesclin was the grand master from 1357 till his death in 1380, and he was the only French commander who prevailed over the chivalry of our Edward III. From 1478 to 1497, we may mark Robert Lenoncourt, a cavalier of one of the most ancient and valiant families of Lorraine. Phillippe Chabot, a renowned captain in the reign of Francis I., wielded the staff of power from 1516 to 1543. The illustrious family of Montmorency appear as Knights Templars, and Henry, the first duke, was the chief of the order from 1574 to 1614. At the close of the seventeenth century the grand master was James Henry de Duras, a marshal of France, the nephew of Turenne, and one of the most skilful soldiers of Louis XIV. The grand masters from 1734 to 1776 were three princes of the royal Bourbon family. The names and years of power of these royal personages who acknowledged the dignity of the order of the Temple were Louis Augustus Bourbon, Duke of Maine, 1724 — 1737: Louis Henry Bourbon Condé, 1737 — 1741; and Louis Francis Bourbon Conty, 1741 — 1746. The successor of these princes in the grand-mastership of the Temple was Louis Hercules Timoleon, Duke de Cossé Brissac, the descendant of an ancient family long celebrated in French history for its loyalty and gallant bearing. He accepted the office in 1776, and sustained it till he died in the cause of royalty at the beginning of the French Revolution. The order has now its grand master, Barnardus Raymundus Fabré Palaprat, and there are colleges in England and in many of the chief cities in Europe.

Thus the very ancient and sovereign order of the Temple is now in full and chivalric existence, like those orders of knighthood which were either formed in imitation of it, or had their origin in the same noble principles of chivalry. It has mourned as well as flourished; but there is in its nature and constitution a

* The Pope (Clement V.) committed the glaring absurdity of making a provisional decree to be executed in perpetuity. The bull which he issued at the council of Vienne, without asking the judgment of the assembled bishops and others, declares, that although he cannot of right, consistently with the Inquisition and proceedings, pronounce a definitive sentence, yet by way of apostolical provision and regulation, he perpetually prohibited people from entering into the order and calling themselves Templars. The penalty of the greater excommunication was held out as a punishment for offending.

Digitized by Google

principle of vitality which has carried it through all the storms of fate. Its continuance, by representatives as well as by title, is as indisputable a fact as the existence of any other chivalric fraternity. The Templars of these days claim no titular rank, yet their station is so far identified with that of the other orders of knighthood, that they assert equal purity of descent from the same bright source of chivalry. Nor is it possible to impugn the legitimate claims to honourable estimation, which the modern brethren of the Temple derive from the antiquity and pristine lustre of their order, without at the same time shaking to its centre the whole venerable fabric of knightly honour.*

The Holy Land was not the only country which gave birth to the religious orders of knighthood. Several arose in Spain, and their arms were mainly instrumental in effecting the triumph of the Christian cause over that of the Moors. War with the usurpers was the pristine object of some of these societies, and in other cases it was based and pillared upon a foundation of charity. Perpetual enmity to the Arabian infidels was the motto of all. Unlike the Christian kings of Spain, the orders never relaxed in their hostility; they never mingled with the Moors in the delights of peace, and their character was formed by their own rules and principles, unaffected by the graceful softenings of oriental luxury and taste.

The most considerable of these Spanish religious orders of knighthood was that of Saint James, of Compostella, which sprang from the association of some knights and monks in the middle of the twelfth century, for the protection of the pilgrims who flocked from all countries to bow before the relics of the tutelar saint of Spain.* The monks were of the society of St. Eloy, a holy person of great fame among our English ancestors; for Chaucer's demure prioress was wont to verify her assertions by appealing to his authority.

"Her greatest oath n'as but by St. Eloy."

The monks and knights lived in friendly communion, the prior of the convent regulating the spiritual concerns, and a grand master, chosen by the cavaliers, leading the soldiers. They were taken under the protection of the papal see, on their professing the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; but afterwards Pope Alexander the Third sank the ascendancy of the monastic portion of their character, for he permitted an oath of connubial fidelity to be

* I add a complete list of the grand-masters of the Temple, from the time of Jacques de Molai to these days. (Manuel des Chevaliers de l'Order du Temple, Paris, 1817.)

	A.D.
Johannes Marcus Larmenius, Hierosolymetanus	1314
Thomas Theobaldus, Alexandrinus	1324
Arnaldus de Braque	1340
Johannes Claromontanus	1349
Bertrandus Du Guesclin	1357
Johannes Arminiacus	1381
Bernardus Arminiacus	1392
Johannes Arminiacus	1419
Johannes Croyus	1451
Bernardus Imbaultius, Vic. Mag. Afric. (Regens.)	1472
Robertus Lenoncurtius	1478
Galeatius de Salazar	1497
Philippus Chabotius	1516
Gaspardus de Salceaco, Tavannensis	1544
Henricus de Montmorenciaco	1574
Carolus Valesius	1615
Jacobus Ruxellius de Granceio	1651
Jacobus Henricus de Duroforti, Dux de Duras	1681
Philippus, Dux de Aurelianensis	1705
Ludovicus-Augustus Borbonius, Dux de Maine	1724
Ludovicus-Henricus Borbonius, Condæus	1737
Ludovicus-Franciscus Borbonis, Conty	1741
Ludovicus-Henricus Timoleo de Cossé Brissac	1776
Claudius Mathæus Radix de Chevillon, Vic. Mag. Europ. (Regens.)	1792
Bernardus-Raymundus Fabré Palaprat	1804

* "I would fain know," quoth Sancho, "why the Spaniards call upon that same St. James, the destroyer of the Moors: just when they are going to give battle, they cry St. Jago and close Spain. Pray is Spain open, that it wants to be closed up? What do you make of that ceremony?"—"Thou art a very simple fellow, Sancho," answered Don Quixote. "Thou must know, that heaven gave to Spain this mighty champion of the Red Cross, for its patron and protector, especially in the desperate engagements which the Spaniards had with the Moors; and therefore they invoke him, in all their martial encounters, as their protector; and many times he has been personally seen cutting and slaying, overthrowing, trampling, and destroying the Moorish Squadrons: of which I could give thee many examples deduced from authentic Spanish histories." Don Quixote, part, ii., c. 58.

Digitized by Google

substituted for that of chastity. A descent of two degrees of gentle birth was required for admission into the order of Saint James, and the Christian blood must have been uncontaminated with any Jewish or Moorish mixture.

The guarding of the passages to the shrine of Saint James from the incursions of the Moors became extended into a general defence of the kingdom against the hostilities of those enemies of the Christian name; and in time their active military operations far exceeded their defensive wars in consequence and splendour. The simple object of their association being forgotten, their glories became associated with the earliest struggles of the Christians for the re-possession of their inheritance; and they pretended to trace their line up to the ninth century, when Saint James himself, riding on a white horse, and bearing a banner marked with a red cross in his hand, assisted them to discomfit the Moors. A cross, finished like the blade of a sword, and the hilt crossleted, became the ensign of the order, and the order was then appropriately called *La Orden de Santiago de la Espada.* The centre of the crosslet was ornamented with an escalop-shell, the badge of Saint James; and nothing can more strongly mark the popularity of his shrine in the middle ages than the fact of the escalop-shell being the usual designation of a European palmer. The cross was worn on a white cross mantle, and was painted red, agreeably, as it might seem, to that on the banner already alluded to. But Don Rodrigo Ximines, an archbishop of Toledo, who dealt in allegories, observed the reason to be that the sword was red with the blood of the Arabs, and that the faith of the knights was burning with charity.

The grand master of the order of Saint James had precedence over the grand masters of other Spanish orders; but the internal government of the fraternity was in the hands of a council, whose decrees were obligatory, even on the grand master himself. The order of Saint James had two great commanderies, one in Leon and the other in Castile; and to them all other establishments were subordinate. There were perpetual disputes for precedency between these commanderies, and the kings of Castile and Leon fomented them, thus preventing a union which might be dangerous to the state itself, and obtaining military aid in return for occasional interference. The gratitude of sovereigns enriched the order with various possessions; but it was its own good swords that won for it the best part of its territories.

Notwithstanding that, like all other religious orders of knighthood, the order of Saint James had originally enjoyed independence of royal authority, yet in the course of time the kings of Castile acquired the right of delivering to every newly-elected grand master the standard of the order. The obedience was only titular till the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Emperor Charles V. obtained from Popes Leo X. and Adrian VI. the supreme direction of all the affairs of the order, and, consequently, the dignity of grand master became attached to the crown. But the power of the king was not suffered to be absolute; for the popes compelled him to consent that the affairs of the order should be managed by a council, with a right of appeal to the Pope himself. The power of the Spanish kings then became a species of influence, rather than of direct prerogative.

The object of the association, the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, being accomplished, this religious order became an order of merit—a feather in the plume of Spanish dignity. It could be gained only by the nobility; for it then behoved every knight to prove the gentility of his descent, maternal and paternal, for four degrees. The old vows of poverty, obedience and conjugal chastity, were preserved, with a mental reservation regarding the two former.

In the year 1652, the knights of Saint James, as well as the knights of Calatrava and Alcantara, in the fervour of their zeal for what they called religion, added a vow to defend and maintain the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. The people of Madrid were invited to three churches to witness the taking of the vows by the knights. After the celebration of the mass, a cavalier, in the name of all his brothers, pronounced the vow,* and

* The words are these: — Y asi mesmo hago voto, detener, voto defender, y guuardar en pub-

Digitized by Google

every one repeated it, placing his hand on the cross and the Gospels. And thus an order, which in its origin was charitable, in its progress patriotic, had the bright glories of its days of honour sullied by superstition.*

The next station in the dignity of rank was occupied by the knights of Calatrava, who, considering the circumstances of their origin, may be regarded as a more honourable fraternity than the brotherhood of St. James. About the year 1147, Alfonso, King of Spain, recovered from the Moors the fortress of Calatrava, which was the key of Toledo. The king committed it to the charge of the Knights Templars. That noble order of Christian soldiers was then in the very infancy of its career of honour, and so few were the red crosses in Spain, that they could not drive back the swelling tide of Muselman power. After retaining it for only eight years, the Templars resigned it into the hands of Don Sancho, successor of Alfonso, who endeavored to secure it for its defenders, by proposing to accord Calatrava and its lands in perpetual possession to such knights as would undertake the guarding of the fortress. The chivalry of Spain, remembering that the brave militia of the Temple had quailed before the Moors, hung back in caution and dismay; and Sancho already saw the fate of Calatrava sealed in Arabian subjection, when the cloisters of a convent rang with a cry of war which was unheard in the baronial hall.

The monastery of Santa Maria de Fetero in Navarre contained a monk named Diego Velasquez, who had spent the morning of his life in arms, but afterwards had changed the mailed frock for a monastic mantle, for in days of chivalry, when religion was the master-spring of action, such conversions were easy and natural. The gloom of a convent was calculated only to repress the martial spirit; but yet the surrounding memorials of military greatness, the armed warrior in stone, the overhanging banner and gauntlet, while they proved the frail nature of earthly happiness, showed what were the subjects wherein men wished for fame beyond the grave. The pomp of the choir-service, the swelling note of exultation in which the victories of the Jews over the enemies of Heaven were sung, could not but excite the heart to admiration of chivalric renown, and in moments of enthusiasm many a monk cast his cowl aside, and changed his rosary for the belt of a knight.

And thus it was with Velasquez. His chivalric spirit was roused by the call of his king, and he lighted a flame of military ardour among his brethren. They implored the superior of the convent to accept the royal proffer; and the king, who was at first astonished at the apparent audacity of the wish, soon recollected that the defence of the fortress of Calatrava could not be achieved by the ordinary exertions of courage, and he then granted it to the Cistertian order, and principally to its station at Santa Maria de Fetero, in Navarre. And the fortress was wisely bestowed; for not only did the bold spirits of the convents keep the Moors at bay in that quarter, but the valour of the friars caused many heroic knights of Spain to join them. To these banded monks and cavaliers the king gave the title of the Religious Fraternity of Calatrava, and Pope Alexander III. accepted their vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity. The new religious order of knighthood, like that of Saint James of Compostella, was a noble bulwark of the Christian kingdom.

Nothing could be more perfect than the simplicity of the knights of Calatrava. Their dress was formed from the coarsest woollen, and the edges were not like those of many a monk of the time, purfiled or ornamented with vair or gris, or other sorts of rich fur. Their diet, too, reproached the usual luxury of the monastery, for the fruits of the earth sustained them. They were silent in the oratory, and the refectory, one voice only reciting the prayers, or reading a legend of battle; but when the first note of the Moorish atabal was heard by the warder on the tower, the convent became a scene of universal uproar. The caparisoning of steeds, and the clashing of armour, broke the repose of the cloister, while

lico, y en secreto, que la Vergen Maria Madre de Dios, y senora nuestra, fue concebida sin mancha de peccato original.

* Favyne, Theat. d'Honneur, l. 6, c. 5. Carode Torres, Hist. de las Ordines Militares, 1, 7, c. 10.

Digitized by Google

the humble figure of the monk was raised into a bold and expanded form of dignity and power. Through all the mighty efforts of the Christians for the recovery of their throne, the firm and dense array of the knights of Calatrava never was tardy in appearing on the field; but the kingdom, as its power and splendour increased, overshadowed the soldiers of every religious order of chivalry. The grand mastership of the Calatrava fraternity became annexed to the thrones of Castile and Leon by the decree of Pope Innocent VIII., and the Kings of Spain kept alive the chivalry of their nation by using the crosses and other emblems of the ancient knighthood as signs of military merit.*

Inferior in dignity and power to both these orders, was the order of Alcantara. It was formed soon after the establishing of the fraternity of Saint James of Compostella, at a town called Saint Julian of the Pear-tree, near Ciudad Rodrigo. The ancient badge was a pear-tree, in allusion to the origin of the order. The knights of the Pear-tree were so poor in worldly estate and consideration, that the knights of Calatrava took them under their protection, and gave them the town of Alcantara. The knights of the Pear-tree then quitted their humble title for a name of loftier sound, though ideas of dependence were associated with it. For nearly two centuries the cavaliers of Alcantara remained the vassals and retainers of the knights of Calatrava; but the spirit of independence gradually rose with their prowess in the field; and about the year 1412 their martial array was led to battle by their own grand master. Until the union of the Spanish crowns in the persons of Ferdinand and Isabella, they rivalled their former lords and the knights of Saint James in power and rank: the crown then placed them within its own control, and like the other fraternities, the main object of whose institution had been the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the cross of the order of Alcantara became a mere decoration of nobility.†

* Mennenius, Delic. Equest. p. 99, &c. Marquez Tesoro Milit. de Cavale, p. 286. Favyn. Theat. de l'Honneur, lib. 6.

† Mennen. Delic. Equest. p. 102, &c. Miræus, and Fr. Caro de Torres, in locis.

Co-existent with these religious brotherhoods was a charitable establishment, which completed the blessings of chivalry in Spain. Experience of the wretchedness of imprisonment taught James I. of Arragon to sympathize with the helpless fate of others; and about the year 1218 he associated several valiant knights and pious ecclesiastics in Barcelona, whose whole thoughts and cares were to have for their chief end and aim the applying of the alms of the charitable towards the liberation of Christian captive. Knights of our Lady of Mercy was their title; and every cavalier at his inauguration professed his heart's resolve to observe the vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, to apply the whole energies of his mind and feelings to succour such of his unhappy countrymen as, by the chance of battle, were in Moorish prisons, and if necessary to remain a slave in the hands of the Saracens rather than abandon his duty of procuring the redemption of captives. The general course of their lives was directed by the rule of Saint Benedict, for a knight as a monk, —

> "When he is reckless,*
> Is like to a fish that is waterless."†

So zealous were the Spaniards in promoting the noble objects of this order, that within the first six years of its institution no less than four hundred captives were ransomed. Originally the government of the order was in the hands of the knights, afterwards the priests obtained a share of the command, and finally they usurped it altogether, a matter of little reprehension, considering that the purpose of the institution had no military features. After the complete triumph of the Christian cause the scene of charity was changed from Spain to Africa; and it is curious to observe, that the order sullied the impartiality of its principle by releasing first the monks who had fallen into the hands of the African Moors, and then, but not before, the laity.‡

Superstition as well as charity gave birth to some religious orders of knight-

* Without rule.

† Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

‡ Reman, Hist. Gen. de la Ordere de la Mercie, passim. Mennen. Del. Eq. p. 107.

Digitized by Google

hood. The Knights of the Wing of Saint Michael, in Portugal, a very honourable order in chivalric times, had their origin in the opinion of Alfonso, King of Portugal, that Saint Michael the Archangel assisted him in 1171 to gain a great victory over the Moors. Only persons of noble birth could be admitted members of this order. The knights lived in their monastery agreeably to the rule of Saint Benedict. Their most anxious care in private life was to discharge the chivalric duty of protecting widows and orphans, and when they marched into the field of battle, the support of the Catholic faith was the motto on their standard.*

But it would be profitless to pursue the subject; for the religious orders of knighthood are only worthy of inquiry as far as they are connected with the defence of the Holy Land, and the expulsion of the Moors from Spain.

> "Turn we now all the matere,
> And speke we of"

The military orders founded in imitation of those whose history has just been related; not that I shall transcribe their statutes or paint their costume, — such matters belong to the herald. It is the part of the historian to notice their existence, to trace the principles which gave rise to them, and to mark such parts of their rules or their annals as reflect the state of manners.

Though knights were often created before battle, for the purpose of stimulating them to achieve high exploits, yet many were invested after they had fought, and proved themselves worthy of their spurs. But knighthood was so much diffused through society, that it almost ceased to be a distinction; and kings and other rulers who wished to show their power or their gratitude were obliged to give a new form to chivalric dignity. The religious orders of knighthood presented a fair example of the benefits of close fraternity; and as those societies often gave a patriotic direction to chivalric feelings, so kings found the orders of military merit which they established admirable means of uniting in a bond of brotherhood their high-spirited nobles. When Louis, king of Hungary, avenged the murder of his brother Andrew, he endeavoured to unite the Hungarian and Neapolitan nobles by associating them in a fraternity called the Order of the Knot. The order did not live long. There were some singular provisions in this order of the Knot: there was to be an annual meeting of the knights on the day of Pentecost; and each knight was obliged to deliver to the chaplain of the order a written account of his adventures in the preceding year. The chaplain delivered it to the king and council, who ordered such parts as they approved of to be registered in the great book of the order. The order of the Argonautes of St. Nicholas, at Naples, was instituted by Charles the Third, for the avowed purpose of fraternising his lords; and in the year 1579, when indeed the days of chivalry may be considered as past, the order of the Holy Ghost was established in France: the friendly union of the nobility and prelates of the land was declared to be a great purpose of the order. The throne of France had already been strengthened by the order of Saint Michael, founded about a century before by Louis XI., to draw the affections of the nobility to himself.

Knights who were associated under one title, and lived under one code of regulations, were in truth companions in arms; and, like any two cavaliers who had vowed to live in brotherhood, the banded knights were united for weal or wo, and were bound to assist each other with council and arms, as if a perfect community of interest existed. This was the general principle, but it was relaxed in favour of knights of foreign countries. Kings frequently interchanged orders, stipulating at the same time that in case of war they should be at liberty to return them. Instances of this nature occur repeatedly in the history of the middle ages; and in the last days of chivalry the principle of the companionship of knights was very artfully applied by Henry VII. to the support of his own avarice. The French king wished to borrow from him a sum of money in order to prosecute a war with the King of Naples; but Henry replied that he could not with honour aid any prince against the sovereign of Naples, who

* Marquez, Tesoro Milit. 35, &c.

Digitized by Google

had received the Garter, and was therefore his companion and ally. To give such assistance would be to act contrary to the oath which he had taken to observe the statutes of the order.*

The rewarding of noble achievements in the higher classes of society was a principle that ran through all the martial orders, but they were not exclusively aristocratic when simple knighthood fell into disuse, and the military brotherhood represented the ancient chivalry. These associations of merit adopted many of the principles and usages of the religious orders of knighthood. Notwithstanding the real causes of their foundation, religious objects were always set forth. Fraternisation and the reward of military merit were undoubtedly the reasons for instituting the most noble order of the Garter; and yet in the statutes the exaltation of the holy faith, Catholic, is declared to be the great purpose of the brotherhood. This is expressed in the statutes of the order promulgated in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and the words are evidently copied from earlier authorities.† As the exaltation of the Roman Catholic religion is certainly not in the minds of the modern members of the Garter, I may adduce these facts in proof of my position in an earlier part of this chapter, that the orders of knighthood have always been flexible to the change of society.

The military, like the religious orders, had their establishments of priests. Thus, to the knights companions of the Garter were added a prelate, a chancellor, and the chapel of Saint George at Windsor, with its dean and chapter. Prayers and thanksgivings were perpetually to be offered to heaven, and masses were ordered to be celebrated for the souls of deceased companions. Some military orders, like their religious exemplars, forgot not the promotion of charitable objects, and Edward the Third, with particular propriety, connected with that most noble order which he founded, a number of poor or alms-knights, men who through adverse fortune were brought to that extremity, that they had not of their own wherewith to sustain them, or live so richly and nobly as became a military condition.*

Every military fraternity had a cross, of some shape or other among its emblems. To the highest order of merit in England a cross, as well as a garter, was assigned: but the silver star of eight points, which Charles I. with so little propriety, and with such wretched taste, commanded the knights to wear, renders insignificant the original chivalric designation of the order. The associations of nobles were always expressed to have been formed to the honour of God, or of some of his saints. Thus, even in the present days, a knight of the Garter is admonished at his installation to wear the symbols of his order, that, by the imitation of the blessed martyr and soldier of Christ, Saint George, he may be able to overpass both adverse and prosperous adventures; and that, having stoutly vanquished his enemies, both of body and soul, he may not only receive the praise of this transitory combat, but be crowned with the palm of eternal victory.

Considering the fact that many of the honours of the present day have a chivalric form, we might expect that most of our military orders could be traced to the splendid times of knighthood. Attempts to prove so high an origin have been often made. Knights of the order called the Most Ancient Order of the Thistle justly think that a foundation in the sixteenth century scarcely merits so august a title. They have ascended, therefore, to the days of Charlemagne

* Caligula. D. 6, in Bib. Cott. (cited in Anstis, Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, vol. i., p. 66,) "Que le Roy ne povoit avec son honneur bailler aide et assistence a icelluy son bon frere et cousin a l'encontre du Roy de Naples, qui estoit son confrere et allye, veu et considere qu'il avoit prins et receu l'ordre de la Jarretiere. Et si le roi autrement faisoit ce seroit contrevenir au serment, qu'il a fait par les statuz du dit ordre," &c.

† This assertion may be supported by some lines in a poem which Chaucer addressed to the Lords and Knights of the Garter. He says to them,

"Do forth, do forth, continue your succour,
Hold up Christ's banner, let it not fall."

And again:

"Ye Lordis eke, shining in noble fame,
To which appropred is the maintenance
Of Christ 'is cause; in honour of his name,
Shove on, and put his foes to utterance."

* Ashmole on the Garter, c. iv., s. 5.

Digitized by Google

himself; and, boasting a union between their king Fergus and that emperor, have contended that the order of the Thistle was founded to commemorate the glorious event. The supporters of this hypothesis tread with timid steps the sombre walks of antiquity; others, with bolder march, have ascended several centuries higher, and fancied that they saw a great battle between the Scots and the English, when the former won the victory by the aid of Saint Andrew, and that an equestrian order, properly called the Order of St. Andrew, and vulgarly, the Order of the Thistle, was founded. With equal extravagance, the order of St. Michael, in France, pretends to the possession of regular descent from Michael the Archangel, who, according to the enlightened judgment of French antiquarians, was the premier chevalier in the world, and it was he, they say, who established the earliest chivalric order in Paradise itself. But, in simple truth, the order of Saint Michael was founded by Louis XI., King of France, in the year 1469, and the name of Michael was used, for he stood as high in favour in France as Saint George did in England. Except the orders of the Garter and the Golden Fleece, the one established in 1344. the other in 1429, and the order of Saint Michael already mentioned, a chivalric origin cannot be successfully claimed for any of the institutions of knighthood. Thus, the order of Saint Stephen was founded in 1561, that of Saint Michael, in Germany, in 1618, and those of the Holy Ghost in 1579, and of Saint Louis, in 1693; and none of these years dates with the age of chivalry. A view, therefore, of most of the military orders that now flourish comes not within the scope of the present work. On one of them, however, a few words may be said.

England, above all other countries, can pride herself on the chivalric nature of her military rewards; for her Most Honourable Order of the Bath is a revival of an institution of chivalry, while her Most Noble Order of the Garter has suffered no suspension of its dignity. In tracing the progress of chivalry in England, I shall show that the knighthood of the Bath was an honour distinct from that which constituted the ordinary knighthood of the sword; and that from very early times to the days of Charles II. it was conferred on occasions of certain august solemnities, with great state, upon the royal issue male, the princes of the blood-royal, several of the nobility, principal officers, and other persons distinguished by their birth, quality, and personal merit. George I., in the year 1727, not only revived that order of knighthood, but converted it into a regular military order.

The curious ceremonies regarding the Bath itself were dispensed with; but in many other respects the imitation was sufficiently exact. It was ordained that a banner of each knight was to be placed over, and a plate of his crest, helmet, and sword, was to be affixed to his stall in the chapel of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey. All the romantic associations of early times were pleasingly attended to; for on the seal of the order were to be represented three imperial crowns *Or*, being the arms usually ascribed to the renowned King Arthur. The lady-love of chivalric times was to be commemorated in the collar; for its seventeen knobs, enamelled white, which linked imperial crowns of gold and thistles, were intended to represent the white laces mentioned in the ancient ceremonial of conferring knighthood of the Bath, and which were worn till the knight had achieved some high emprise, or till they had been removed by the hand of some fair and noble lady. The collar, however, is an honorary distinction of the order, whereas the white laces were regarded as a stigma. The form of the old oath was also strictly preserved, even with the singular clause that a knight would defend maidens, widows, and orphans, in their rights; and, as it had been said in old times, a newly-made companion was admonished to use his sword to the glory of God, the defence of the Gospel, the maintenance of his sovereign's right and honour, and of all equity and justice, to the utmost of his power. At the close of the ceremony, and without the door of the abbey, the king's master-cook made the usual admonition to him, viz. "Sir, you know what great oath you have taken; which, if you keep it, will be great

Digitized by Google

honour to you; but if you break it, I shall be compelled, by my office, to hack off your spurs from your heels."

Of those orders, which are either dormant or extinct, the account needs only be brief; for their history contains little matter that is either fanciful or instructive. An enlightened curiosity could find no satisfaction in investigating the annals of the extinct order of St. Anthony of Hainault, or of the order of Cyprus, and a thousand others, whose history, presenting only a list of grand masters, and the ceremonies of knightly inauguration, adds nothing to our pleasure or our knowledge.

A few exceptions may be made to this opinion. In the year 1330, Alphonso XI., King of Spain, attached many of the nobility to his interests by founding an order of merit, which, from the circumstance of every knight wearing a red ribbon three inches broad across the breast and shoulder, was called the order of the Band or Scarf. Some of the rules of the institution are exceedingly interesting, as reflecting the state of manners and opinions in Spain during the fourteenth century. Not only were the duties of patriotism and royalty inculcated by the statutes of the order, but, singular as it may seem in the history of Spain, virtue was to be cultivated at court, for every knight was charged to speak nothing but truth to his sovereign, and to abhor dissimulation and flattery. He was not to be silent whenever any person spoke against the king's honour, upon pain of being banished from the court, and deprived of his band: but he was to be always ready to address the king for the general good of the country, or on the particular affair of any individual; and supposing that his patriotic virtue might be checked by his attachment to his sovereign, the punishment for neglecting this duty was a forfeiture of all his patrimony, and perpetual banishment. Of the two extremes, taciturnity was to be preferred to loquaciousness: he was to be rather "checked for silence" than "taxed for speech;" and if in his conversation he uttered an untruth, he was to walk in the streets without a sword for a month. He was bound to keep his faith to whomever he had pledged it; but he was to associate only with men of martial rank, despising the conversation of mechanics and artisans.

Every knight was enjoined always to have good armour in his chamber, good horses in his stable, good lances in his hall, and a good sword by his side; nor was he to be mounted upon any mule nor other unseemingly hackney, nor to walk abroad without his band, nor to enter the king's palace without his sword; and he was to avoid all ascetic practices, for he was particularly enjoined not to eat alone. The vices of flattery and of scoffing were to be shunned; and the penalty for committing them was for the knight to walk on foot for a month, and to be confined to his house for another month. Boasting and repining were both prohibited: the reproof of the grand master and the neglect of him by his companions were to punish the offender. A knight was not permitted to complain of any hurt;* and even while he was being mangled by the surgeons of the time, he was to deport himself with stoical firmness. In walking, either in the court or the city, the gait of the knight was to be slow and solemn; and he was exhorted to preserve a discreet and grave demeanour, when any vain and foolish person mocked at and scorned him.

Chivalric duties to women were more insisted upon in this order than in any other. If a knight instituted an action against the daughter of a brother-knight no lady or gentlewoman of the court would ever afterwards be his lady-love, or wife. If he happened, when he was riding, to meet any lady or gentlewoman of the court it was his duty to alight from his horse, and tender her his service, upon pain of losing a month's wages and the favour of all dames and damsels. The

* This rule did not escape Cervantes. "If I do not complain of the pain," says Don Quixote, after the disastrous chance of the windmills, "it is because a knight-errant must never complain of his wounds, though his bowels were dropping out through them." — "Then I have no more to say," quoth Sancho; "and yet, heaven knows my heart, I should be glad to hear your worship hone a little now and then when something ails you; for my part, I shall not fail to bemoan myself when I suffer the smallest pain, unless, indeed, it can be proved, that the rule of not complaining extends to the squires as well as knights." Don Quixote, part i., book 1, c. 8.

Digitized by Google

circumstance was scarcely conceived to be possible, but the statutes of the order, to provide for every imaginable as well as every probable offence, decreed that he who refused to perform any service which a fair lady commanded should be branded with the title, The Discourteous Knight.

The statutes echoed the voice of nature in all her appeals to the heart; and thus every cavalier was enjoined to select from the ladies of the court some one upon whom his affections might rest, some one who was to be to him like a light leading him forward in the noble path of chivalry. There was no penalty for disobedience to this command, for disobedience seems to have been thought impossible. All the higher acts of chivalric devotion to his lady-love were presumed to be performed by the knight; and to show that his daily duties to his Order were to give way to his attention to his mistress, it was commanded that whenever she pleased to walk, he was to attend upon her on foot or on horseback, to do her all possible honour and service. When by his valiant feats against the Moors he had proved himself worthy of her love, the day of his marriage was a festival with his brother-knights, who made rich presents to the lady, and honoured the nuptials with cavaleresque games and shows. Nor did this generous consideration for woman stop here; for when a knight died, his surviving brothers were bound to solicit the King to make such grants of land and money to the family as would enable the widow to maintain her wonted state, and would furnish the marriage-portions of his daughters.

The band of the deceased knight was, agreeably to the general usage of the military orders, to be re-delivered to the king, who was to be solicited to bestow it upon one of the sons of its last wearer. The king was to select the knights from among the younger sons of men of station in the country, but no elder brother or other heir-apparent could be received; for it was the purpose of the founder to advance the fortunes of the nobly born, but indifferently provided, gentlemen of his court. Only one species of exception was made to this form of introduction. The honour of the order was conferred upon any stranger-knight who overcame one of the companions in the joust or tournament. This regulation was made for the general honour of chivalry, and the promotion of noble chevisance among the knights of the band. It was a bold defiance, and seldom answered.*

The order of Bourbon, called of the Thistle, and of Our Lady must not pass unnoticed. It was instituted at Moulins, in the Bourbonnois, in the year 1370, by Louis II., Duke of Bourbon, who was named, on account of his virtues, the Good Duke. It had for its object the winning of honour by acts of chivalry. The device of the order was a golden shield; and when it was given to knights they were exhorted to live as brethren, and die for each other if occasion should require it. They were told that every good action which beseemed chivalry ought to be performed by the knights of Bourbon. Above all things, they were exhorted to honour ladies, not permitting any man to speak slanderous matters of them, because, after God, comes from them all honour which men can acquire. Nothing could be more base than to vilify that sex which had not the strength to redress its wrongs. The knights were charged not to speak evil of each other, for that was the foulest vice which a nobleman or gentleman could be taxed with; and in conclusion, as the summary of their duty, they were exhorted to practice faith and loyalty, and to respect each other as became knights of praise and virtue.†

The occasions of the titles of many of the military orders are more interesting than a view of the external marks of their chivalry. Notwithstanding the haughtiness of knighthood, one of the most celebrated orders took its name from no chivalric source. The order was instituted by Philip Duke of Burgundy, who named the fraternity the Knights of the Golden Fleece, in gratitude to the trade in woollens by which he and his family had been so much enriched. In the fifteenth century, the order of the Porcupine was highly celebrated in France; and it was furnished with its singular title from the fancy of

* Favyn, lib. vi. Mariana, lib. xvi., c. 2.
† Favyn, lib. iii., c. 12.

Digitized by Google

the founder (Louis Duke of Orleans, second son of Charles V., King of France), that by such a sign he should commemorate the fact, that he had been abandoned by his friends in adversity, and that he was able to defend himself by his own weapons. While the Porcupine was a favourite order in France, that of the Dragon-overthrown was famous in Germany; and by this ferocious title, the Emperor Sigismond intended to express his conquest over heresy and schism. The Dukes of Mantua fancied that they possessed three drops of our Saviour's blood; and an order of knighthood was instituted in the year 1608, which took for its title the order of the Precious Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, at Mantua.

The chivalric nations of Europe attached as much consequence to orders which existed only in their own fervid imagination as to those whose lineage was certain. To Constantine the Great was ascribed the honour of inventing the first military order of knighthood. The great captains of his court were said to have been associated under the title of the order of the Constantinian Angelic Knights of Saint George, that Saint being in Greece, as well as in England, the patron of military men. The grand-mastership resided in the Imperial family. After the fall of the Eastern empire, the order passed into Italy; and the knights of that country imagined the existence of papal bulls, which permitted the grand masters to sit at the same table with the Popes, to coin money, and to confer titles of honour, whether in nobility or learning, and exercise every prerogative of independent princes. But it would be in vain to inquire after the names of any of these mensal companions of the Pope; and no cabinet of curiosities contains any coins which they struck in attestation of their power.

The memory of Charles Martel's great victory over the Moors was preserved in the middle ages of France, by the belief that the conqueror had established an order of knighthood called the Order of the Gennet; and lists of cavaliers were drawn out, and statutes imagined, attesting only the love of the French for chivalric distinctions. The Spaniards delighted to imagine that their early victories over the Moors were commemorated by an order called the Order of the Oak in Navarre, and founded on occasion of the Holy Cross, adored by an infinite number of angels, appearing to a Gothic chief who led the Christians.

But of all these imaginary orders none is so interesting as that of the Round Table, instituted by Uther Pendragon, King of Great Britain, and which reached its perfection of martial glory in the reign of his son Arthur. While our ancient historians exaggerated into heroism the patriotic efforts of the last of the British kings, the minstrels who sang in the baronial halls superadded the charms of chivalric circumstance. Since the time of Adam, God hath not made a man more perfect than Arthur, was the favourite opinion; and when his remains were discovered in the Abbey of Glastonbury, in the year 1189, the people from their idea that prowess always corresponded with size of limb fancied that his bones were of gigantic frame.*

The court of Arthur was supposed to be the seminary of military discipline of knights of all countries; and it was thought that his hundred and fifty† good

* Giraldus says, that the leg-bone of Arthur was three fingers longer than that of the tallest man present at the opening. Selden, in his Illustrations of Drayton, gives a very interesting account of the discovery of Great Arthur's tomb. "Henry II., in his expedition towards Ireland, was entertained by the way, in Wales, with bardish songs, wherein he heard it affirmed, that in Glastonbury (made almost an isle by the river's embracements) Arthur was buried betwixt two pillars; he gave commandment to Henry of Blois, then abbot, to make search for the corpse: which was found in a wooden coffin some sixteen foote deepe; but, after they had digged nine foot, they found a stone, on whose lower side was fixt a leaden cross with his name inscribed, and the letter-side of it turned to the stone. He was then honoured with a sumptuous monument; and, afterwards, the skulls of him and his wife Guinever were taken out (to remain as separate reliques and spectacles) by Edward Longshanks and Eleanor. The bards sang, that, after the battle of Camlan, in Cornwall, where traitorous Mordred was slain, and Arthur wounded, Morgan la Fay conveyed the body hither to cure it; which done, Arthur is to return (yet expected) to the rule of his country."

† At the high feast, evermore, there should be fulfilled the whole number of a hundred and fifty, for then it was the Round Table fully accomplished. Morte de Arthur, lib. vii., c. 1.

Digitized by Google

companions felt it their chief devoir to protect widows, maidens, and orphans,* not only in England, but in every country whither they might be invited. They were champions of the public weal, and like lions repulsed the enemies of their country. It was their duty to advance the reputation of honour, and suppress all vice, to relieve people afflicted by adverse fortune, to fight for the holy church, and protect pilgrims. They were likewise supposed to be enjoined to bury soldiers that wanted sepulture, to deliver prisoners, ransom captives, and heal men who had been wounded in the service of chivalry and their country. Independently of these patriotic and humane charges, they were thought to have formed a standing court for the redress of injuries; for Arthur, in case of any complaint being laid before him, was bound to send one of his knights to redress it.

The virtues of the knights of the Round Table were the mirror in which the chivalry of England arrayed themselves. These virtues are admirably described in the lamentation of Sir Ector over the dead body of Sir Launcelot of the Lake, the prowest of all the companions of Arthur: — "Thou wert never matched of none earthly knight's hands; and thou wert the curtiest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put sphere in the rest."* Next in rank to Sir Launcelet was his friend Sir Tristram, the history of whose emprises and love entered so largely into the fancies and conversation of our ancestors. Then came Sir Gawaine, a nephew of Arthur, the bright exemplar of courtesy, the virtue which was so highly prized in chivalric times. Chaucer makes a very pleasing allusion to him in his Squire's Tale. Describing the entrance of the strange knight, our old bard says that he

> "Salueth king and lordes alle
> By order as they sat in the hall,
> With so high reverence and observance,
> As well in speech as in his countenance,
> That Gawain with his old courtesy,
> Though he were come agen out of faerie,
> Ne coude him not amenden with a word."

The most prominent of all the chivalric virtues which the institutions of Arthur shadowed forth was that of fraternity; for it was believed that round one vast and mysterious table, the gift of the enchanter Merlin, Arthur and all his peerage sat in perfect equality; and to this idea may be traced the circumstance that the friendly familiarity of a chivalric round table broke down the iron distinctions of feudal haughtiness, and not only "mitigated kings into companions, but raised private men to be fellows with kings." Localities unlock the gates of memory, whether the stores within be treasured there by imagination or the sterner powers of the mind; and with a more serious interest than that with which the modern traveller follows Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena our ancestors were wont to mark Winchester and Windsor, Camelot in Somersetshire, Carlion in Monmouthshire, where

> "Uther's son,
> Begirt with British and Armoric knights,"

held his solemn feasts about the Round Table.

Many of the orders whose histories fill the pages of works on knighthood have no claims to their places; for they were only associations of cavaliers without

* The general objects of the knights of the Round Table are exceedingly well stated in the following fine passage of genuine, expressive old English: — "Then King Arthur stablished all his knights, and to them that were of lands not rich he gave them lands, and charged them never to do outrageouste, nor murder, and always to flee treason. Also by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordships to King Arthur, for evermore; and always to do ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen, succour, upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrongful quarrel for no law, nor for no world's goods. Unto this were all the knights sworn of the table round, both old and young. And every year were they sworn at the high feast of Pentecost." Morte d'Arthur, lib. iv., c. last.

* Morte d'Arthur, lib. ult., cap. ult.

Digitized by Google

royal or pontifical authority, and wearing no badge or cross, except in the imagination of the writer. Only one of these fraternities merits mention here. The Society de la Calza (of the Stocking) was formed at Venice in the year 1400, to the honour of the inauguration of the Doge, Michele Steno. The employments of the members were conversation and festivity; and so splendid were the entertainments of music and dancing, that the gay spirits of other parts of Italy anxiously solicited the honour of seats in the society. All their statutes regarded only the ceremonies of the ball or the theatre; and the members being resolved on their rigorous performance, took an oath in a church to that tendency. They had banners and a seal like an authorized order of knighthood. Their dress was as splendid and elegant as Venetian luxury and taste could fashion it; and, consistently with the singular custom of the Italians of marking academies and other intellectual associations by some external signs of folly, the members when they met in literary discussion were distinguished by the colours of their stockings. The colours were sometimes fantastically blended, and at other times one colour, particularly the *blue*, prevailed. The Society de la Calza lasted till the year 1590,* when the foppery of Italian literature took some other symbol. The rejected title then crossed the Alps, and found a congenial soil in the flippancy and literary triflings of Parisian society, and particularly branded female pedantry as the strongest feature in the character of French pretension. It diverged from France to England, and for a while marked the vanity of the small advances in literature of our female coteries. But the propriety of its application is now gradually ceasing; for we see in every circle that attainments in literature can be accomplished with no loss of womanly modesty. It is in this country, above all others, that knowledge asserts her right of general dominion, or contends that if she be the sustaining energy of one sex, she forms the lighter charm, the graceful drapery of the other.

* Ashmole, p. 105.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND, FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD II.

Chivalry connected with Feudalism.—Stipendiary Knights.—Knighthood a compulsory Honour.—Fine Instance of Chivalry in the Reign of Edward I.—Effect of Chivalry in Stephen's Reign.—Troubadours and Romance Writers in the Reign of Henry II.—Chivalric Manners of the Time.—Cœur de Lion the first Chivalric King.—His Knightly Bearing.—John and Henry III.—Edward I.—His Gallantry at a tournament.—His unchivalric Cruelties.—He possessed no knightly Courtesy.—Picture of ancient Manners.—Edward II.—Chivalric Circumstance in the Battle of Bannockburn.—Singular Effect of Chivalry in the Reign of Edward II.

In the first chapter we traced, by the help of the few lights which yet remain, the rise of chivalry in Europe. We may now mark its progress, and, in order to avoid the inconvenience of frequent transitions, it will be better to follow the historical train in each chivalric country, than to attempt to form one general collection of knightly events. And first, of its influence in England.

Many chivalric principles and customs were known to the Anglo-Saxons,* and affected, in some degree, the character of the nation.† Many of the elements of chivalry were brought into England by the Normans, and, in the course of time, they were framed, by the energy which was involved in them, into a fair and noble system. The adventurousness of knighthood comported well with a people who, quitting the inhospitable shores of Scandinavia, had impressed their conquests on France, Italy, and even Greece. The Norman nation was one vast brotherhood, and therefore it was natural for them to nourish the principles of chivalric fraternity.‡ It is re-

* Pp. 14, 15, 16, ante.

† The exact degree of this influence it is impossible to ascertain now. The author of the romance of Ivanhoe appears to deny it altogether; and while he represents the Normans as perfectly chivalric, he describes, for the sake of contrast, the Anglo-Saxons as totally unadorned with the graces of knighthood. This is a sacrifice of historic truth to dramatic effect, and materially detracts from the merit of Ivanhoe as a faithful picture of ancient manners.

‡ Glaber Rod, c. 5.

Digitized by Google

corded of them that they brought from the north a love of splendour, and having learned courtesy of manner from the French, they were fitted to admire the shows and the gallantry of knighthood.* They affected, indeed, to despise the religious parts of the Saxon ceremonies of initiation into knighthood, but they soon adopted them; for we find that William Rufus himself was knighted by Archbishop Lanfrank.†

Chivalry became established as part of the national constitution when William the Conqueror divided the country into about sixty thousand knights' fees, with the tenure of military service. The clergy, as well as the laity, were compelled to furnish armed knights, on horseback, as the price of their possessions, when the king went abroad against his enemies; and, consequently, knights became attached to every ecclesiastical foundation. These servants of the church were generally younger members of baronial families; and as there was constant occasion for them, chivalry became a military profession. In England, as in every country, the feudal array was found insufficient for foreign wars, and wide-spread domestic rebellions; for few contests could be finished in forty days,— and that was the brief space which, in the earliest simplicity of feudal times, had been fixed for the duration of military service. As petty states swelled into kingdoms, and their public operations became extensive, many a martial enterprise was broken up before achievement, because the time of service had expired. So frequent were the calls on the holders of knights' fees, that they were glad to compromise for attendance by pecuniary penalties. The sovereigns were exorbitant in their exactions, in order to be able to pay the stipendiary substitutes; but one of the most important provisions of Magna Charta gave to parliament alone the power of imposing this escuage or military tax.‡ When the custom of escuage arose is a matter which no antiquarian researches have settled. The clause in Magna Charta shows not only its existence, but its being used as an instrument of tyranny; and under this aspect of chivalric history, the reign of John is important. Most of these stipendiary subsidiaries were knights, with their equipments of men-at-arms and archers; and the sovereign was accustomed to contract with his barons for their attendance upon him in his foreign expeditions. Chivalry and feudal tenure were, therefore, no longer convertible terms; yet the spirit of knighthood long survived the decay of the forms of feudal obligation; for the practice of escuage was fully established in the days of Edward III.; and that was the brightest era of English chivalry.

In England, knighthood was always regarded as the necessary distinction of people of some substance and estate.* In the reigns of our three first Edwards, the qualification for knighthood varied from land of the yearly value of forty to that of fifty pounds. The King was the sovereign and supreme judge of chivalry, and he might confer knighthood on whomsoever he chose. He could compel men of worth to be knights, for knighthood was honourable to the kingdom. Like the performance of every other duty in all states of society, that of knighthood could be commuted for by money; and the royal invitation to honour was so extensive as to be inconvenient; for a statute was passed in the reign of Edward II., whereby the King respited for some time the payment of the fines of such persons whose station in the world made knighthood a necessary part of their consequence. Besides all these ways of forming the knighthood of England, must be added the custom of elevating to chivalric dignities men who had gained renown by martial exploits. This was indeed a mode more pure in principle, and, therefore, more honourable than any we have mentioned.

The military necessities of many of our sovereigns favoured the growth of chivalry. William Rufus invited to his court the prowest cavaliers from every

* Snorre, Malmsbury, p. 174.

† Ingulf, p. 512. Order, Vit. p. 460, 463, &c. Malmsbury, passim. Dudo, p. 82.

‡ Magna Charta, cl. xiv.

* Lord Lyttleton gives no higher date to this compulsory knighthood than the reign of Henry III. But it surely must have existed earlier, as it seems the natural consequence of the change of constitution, effected by William I.; by his uniting chivalry to feudalism.

Digitized by Google

country;* for as his father had effected the subjugation of Harold not merely by the feudal force of Normandy, but by hired soldiers, it was the natural policy of the kings of the Norman line to attach to their person valiant men who were not connected by ties of nature with the people.

The principles and feelings of chivalry were firmly established in England in the reign of Henry I., and gave the tone and character to our foreign military warfare. This state of things is proved in an interesting manner by a circumstance that occurred during the war of Henry with Louis the French king. The reader remembers that the latter had espoused the cause of William, the son of Robert, Henry's elder brother, who was kept by his uncle from his rightful inheritance of Normandy. The chivalric anecdote is this. The two armies were approaching each other near Audelay, when, instead of rushing to the conflict with their whole masses, five hundred knights on the English side, and four hundred on the French, prepared for an encounter, a joust to the utterance. About eighty Normans, friends of the French king, charged the centre of Henry's line with true chivalric fire. The English monarch was severely wounded in the head, but the Normans could not pierce the firm line of the English, and they were all taken prisoners. The three hundred remaining knights of Louis made a fine attempt to redeem their companions in arms. Again the English line was impenetrable, and the recoil of the shock scattered the French. Henry's soldiers now were assailants; and so fiercely did they press their advantage, that even the French king scarcely escaped with life.†

The knightly character had an important effect on England during the troublous reign of Stephen. As he was deserted by his barons, he called in foreign cavaliers to assist him in his resistance to the Empress Maud. Their valour was rewarded by the grant of estates; and thus a new order of nobility arose to shake the arrogance of the old; and new opinions, feelings, and manners, became blended with English habits.

The arms of chivalry grew rusty in the long and unwarlike reign of Henry II.; but many of the milder graces of knighthood were cultivated in consequence of the love of letters entertained by the sovereign and his queen. The Troubadours found royal, and, from the force of example, noble, patronage in England; and, however offensive to a clasic ear their conceits and bombast may sound, yet, since they treated love as an affair of the fancy rather than as an appetite, they contributed to purify the manners of the age. By another channel, literature promoted the cause of arms. Romance, with her bold fictions and splendid colouring, inspired the tamest hearts with the love of adventure. Such of the traditions and fables regarding Arthur and the knights of the Round Table as dwelt in the memory of the people of Brittany (that ancient colony of England) were collected by an Arch-deacon Walter, of Oxford, and formed part of a Latin history of Great Britain that was written in the time of Henry I. by Jeffry of Monmouth. Wace, the translator-general of the age, turned it into Anglo-Norman verse, mingling with it all the stories of his hero that were floating in the English mind. The subject was fitted to the martial taste of the time; and as the book was now rendered into the language of the upper classes of life, it found its way into the baronial hall and the lady's bower. This was the earliest of the French metrical romances; and before the close of the twelfth century nothing was read by the nobility but romances of Arthur and his knights. And the sports and exercises of the time nourished the chivalric spirit. A writer of those days has given us a graphic description of them. "Every Sunday in Lent, immediately after dinner, crowds of noble and sprightly youths, mounted on war-horses, admirably trained to perform all their turnings and evolutions, ride into the fields in distinct

* Wace tells us that William Rufus never could hear a knight of prowess spoken of without endeavouring to engage his services.

"Li reis ros fu de grant noblesce
Proz, et de mult grant largesce.
N'oist de chevalier parler,
Qui de proesse oist loer,
Qui en son breif escrit ne fust,
Et qui par an del soen n'eust."

† Huntingdon, p. 381. Order. Vit., 854, &c.

Digitized by Google

bands, armed with lances and shields, and exhibit representations of battles, and go through all their martial exercises. Many of the young nobility, who have not yet received the honour of knighthood, issue from the king's court, and from the houses of bishops, earls, and barons, to make trial of their courage, strength, and skill in arms. The hope of victory rouses the spirits of these noble youths; their fiery horses neigh and prance, and champ their foaming bits. At length the signal is given, and the sports begin. The youths, divided into opposite bands, encounter one another. In one place some fly, and others pursue, without being able to overtake them. In another place, one of the bands overtakes and overturns the other."*

Martial daring, thus fostered and promoted, broke out with fresh vigour in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion; and England, which hitherto had but partially and occasionally engaged in the crusades, now took up those sacred and perilous enterprises with the ardour of the French. Richard was the first king of England of knightly character; for I cannot, with some writers, place William Rufus among our chivalric sovereigns. I cannot with them see any thing magnanimous in his receiving under his banners an enemy's soldier who had unhorsed him, and who had forborne to slay him because he had declared himself king of England. The conduct of the soldier merited reward; and William acted only with common selfishness in taking so good a soldier into his service. Rufus had mere brutal courage, but that quality was not the character of chivalry. His bravery was not directed either by religion or the love of fame, nor was it tempered into virtue by the charities of life. When, with Robert, he besieged his brother Henry in his castle, Rufus was guilty of one of the most unchivalric acts on record. Henry's supply of water was exhausted, and he solicited some from his brothers on the true knightly principle that valour should decide a triumph, and that it was unworthy a soldier's pride to gain a victory merely by the circumstance of his antagonists being in want of the common necessaries of life. Robert, with fine chivalric generosity, supplied his brother, much to the regret of William, who ridiculed, and was angry at his simplicity.*

But in Richard the whole knightly character appeared in all its martial dignity and splendour. His courage was not the mere savage confidence in superior strength, but the fine display of chivalric exercises. Such was the might of his arm, and such the fierceness of his spirit, that he could sweep from the field whole squadrons of knights. When we see his javelin transfixing a Turk on the walls of Acre,† the exploits of Grecian heroes appear to be no longer poetical fictions; and when he appears on the plains of Palestine, grasping his lance, and riding from wing to wing of the Saracenian host without meeting an enemy who dared to encounter his career, the stories of Arthur and the Round Table seem the calm relations of truth.

No one was more attentive than Richard to the regulations of chivalry. In the course of his crusade he was assailed by some rustics, against whom it was unlawful for a knight to use his sword. He beat them with the flat part of it till it broke, and he then took up stones, and drove them away.‡

* Stephan. Descrip. Lond., p. 7.

* Malmsbury, p. 121.

† Vinesauf, p. 338.

‡ Hoveden, p. 673. This principle of chivalric pride did not escape the good-humoured ridicule of Cervantes. "As for myself," answered the bruised Don Quixote, after his battle with the Yanguesian carriers, "I must own I cannot set a term to the days of our recovery; but it is I who am the fatal cause of all this mischief; for I ought not to have drawn my sword upon a company of fellows, upon whom the honour of knighthood was never conferred; and I do not doubt, but that the Lord of Hosts suffered this punishment to befall me for thus transgressing the laws of chivalry. Therefore, friend Sancho, observe what I am going to tell thee, for it is a thing that highly concerns the welfare of us both: it is, that, for the future, whenever thou perceivest us to be any ways abused by such inferior fellows, thou art not to expect I should offer to draw my sword against them, for I will not do it in the least; no, do thou then draw, and chastise them as thou thinkest fit; but if any knights come to take their parts, then will I be sure to step between thee and danger, and assault them with the utmost vigour and intrepidity." Don Quixote, part i., book 3, c. 1.

Digitized by Google

Richard's mind was framed in the finest spirit of chivalric liberality. His largesses, both to his own soldiers and those of his ally, Philip Augustus, while in Sicily during their voyage to Palestine, were so magnificent, that it was acknowledged he had given more treasure in a month than his predecessors in a year.*

Like the knights of romance, he revelled in gorgeousness and splendour, and his court resounded with the minstrel's lay. One of the Provençal poets followed him into Palestine; nor did he entirely want the minds of others to soften into grace his martial spirit; for often his own fancy played with poetical images. In the history of chivalric amusements, Richard is an important character. All his predecessors in sovereignty had forbidden jousts and tournaments; and their absurd regulations had only been violated in the time of Stephen. When Richard was in the Holy Land, he observed the inferiority of the English chivalry to that of the French: his own knights were rude soldiers, with none of the dexterity and skill of their crusading brethren, which could only be acquired in tournaments, the schools of war. Richard broke through the jealousy of adopting foreign customs, and, like a politic monarch, he allowed and encouraged his soldiers to practice martial exercises.†

These circumstances, and the various other events of his chivalric life, which I have described at length in another work, complete the authentic character of our lion-hearted king, for I dare not invest the severe simplicity of history with those golden fictions which romance has delighted to throw over the story of his Eastern achievements.

There was nothing chivalric in the character and conduct of his brother and successor King John, or he would not have suffered the foreign possessions of England's crown to be wrested from it. In the reign of Henry III. the flame of chivalry was kept alive by some English knights, who assisted the Emperor in his Milanese wars, and whose prowess was the most distinguished of the day. The crusades to the Holy Land were not altogether forgotten; but the page of our history is marked with the peculiar disgrace that English knights assisted the French in their inhuman war on the Albigenses.

There was much of the chivalric character in Edward I. He was a diligent reader of the ancient romances; and, as soon as he was invested with knighthood, he went to foreign courts, in order that he might display his prowess.* For the sake of acquiring military fame, he exposed his person in the Holy Land, and, during his journey homeward, though ill and forespent with travel, he displayed remarkable heroism at a tournament in Savoy.† The challenger was the Count of Chalons; but if pontifical authority could have destroyed chivalry, the knights never would have met. The pope feared that some hostility was menaced, and earnestly dissuaded Edward from the tournament. He warned him of his danger; he exhorted him, as a son of the church, to decline these encounters, which the church had forbidden; and he added, that as Edward now was king, he might decline the challenge, as kings were not wont to risk their persons in these perilous shocks. But most of these reasons were so many stimulants of his courage: the more danger, the greater share of honour, and it was beneath the gallantry of his bearing to have thrown his rank as a shield before his knighthood. Followed by a thousand men at arms, and archers on horseback and on foot, Edward pressed his bounding steed upon the chosen plain, and the Count of Chalons met him with equal spirit, and nearly twice the number of companions. The English king soon found that no lofty courtesy, no love of chivalric exercises, had influenced the French lord. The graceful tournament soon became a deadly fray. The cause of honour triumphed, and the knights of Chalons were either slain or driven from the field. After many cavaliers on each side had been disabled, the lords of either host encountered. Their lances met and shivered; and if Chalons had been a courteous knight, he would have passed to the other end of the plain, and seized a new lance to continue his emprise; but,

* Hoveden, p. 687.
† William of Newbridge, lib. v., c. 4.

* M. of Westminster, p. 300.
† Walsingham, p. 13.

Digitized by Google

maddened at his weapon failing, he threw himself upon Edward, endeavouring to crush him by his prodigious weight. At that moment Edward's horse started forwards, and the Count was thrown on the ground. His companions raised him; but he was so much bruised by the fall that he cried for mercy. His conduct had put him without the pale of chivalry, and Edward, therefore, treated him like a base-born churl. He beat him with the flat part of his sword; and, refusing to take him as his prisoner, he compelled him to surrender himself to a man of mean condition.*

Edward's love of chivalric exercises was imitated by his nobility. Tournaments and jousts were held in various parts of the country; and Kenilworth is particularly marked as famous for its Round Table, to which knights from every nation flocked.† In his Scotch wars, therefore, his armies were not deficient in chivalric bravery. At the battle of Falkirk, the strength of the Scots was foot, as that of the English was horse; and the repeated charges of Edward's chivalry decided the fate of that memorable day. In his Welsh wars he had sullied his reputation for knightly generosity by making a public exhibition of the head of his worsted foe, Llewelyn ap Gryffyth, the last sovereign of Wales;‡ and his well-known conduct to Wallace betrayed such an absence of all nobleness of mind, that he forfeited his claims to knightly consideration. The beautiful parts, the embellishments of chivalry, were subservient to his ambition. Before his second war in Scotland he vowed, in Westminster abbey, by God, and also by two swans which were introduced into the assembly with great pomp and splendour, that he would punish the Scottish nation for their breach of faith, and for the death of Comyn. Nor did any of the courtesies of chivalry grace Edward: the queen of Bruce and her ladies fell into his power, and in defiance of all chivalric gallantry, he treated them as prisoners. There was something peculiarly ferocious in his treatment of the Countess of Buchan, who was also his captive. Her offence was, that she had crowned Bruce. Edward exclaimed, with the deliberation of malignity, "As she has not used the sword, she shall not perish by the sword; but for her lawless conspiracy, she shall be shut up in a stone and iron chamber, circular as the crown she gave; and at Berwick she shall be suspended in the open air, a spectacle to travellers, and for her everlasting infamy."* And the English Tamerlane did not relent.†

The close of the reign of Edward I. is remarkable for a very splendid scene illustrative of the ancient mode of creating knights, and of the chivalric manners of our forefathers. Before his last and fatal journey to Scotland, Edward caused proclamation to be made throughout England, that all persons who were entitled to the honour of knighthood by custom of hereditary succession, or who had estates sufficient to support the dignity, should, at the next feast of Pentecost, repair to Westminster, and that to every one would be delivered out of the King's wardrobe, at the King's expense, the festive and inauguratory dress of a knight.

Accordingly, at the time and place appointed, there was a fair and gallant

* Matt. of Westm., p. 402. Hemingford, p. 592.

† Walsingham, p. 8. Leland's Collectanea, p. 177.

‡ He sent the head up to London, adorned in derision with a silver crown, that it might be exhibited to the populace in Cheapside, and fixed upon the Tower. Knyghton, p. 2465. Mr. Sharon Turner (History of England, vol. ii., p. 44) judiciously contrasts the conduct of Edward with the reprimand of William the Conqueror, to the knight who had wounded the dead body of Harold.

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 460.

† The chamberlain of Scotland was directed by Edward I., A.D. 1306, to fit up one of the turrets of the castle of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and therein to build a strong cage, of lattice-work, constructed with stout posts and bars, and well strengthened with iron. The Countess was prohibited from speaking with any person, Scotch or English, except the keeper of the castle, and a woman or two of the town of Berwick, appointed by him to deliver her food. The sister of Robert Bruce was a prisoner at the same time, and treated in the same manner. Lord Hailes's observation on this passage is amusing. "To those who have no notion of any cage but one for a parrot or a squirrel, hung out at a window, I despair of rendering this mandate intelligible."

Digitized by Google

show of three hundred young gentlemen, sons of earls, barons, and knights, and among these aspirants to chivalry were distributed in ample measure, according to their different ranks, purple, fine linen, furs, and mantles embroidered with gold. The royal palace, though magnificently spacious, could not accommodate all these young esquires with their retinue of yeomen and pages. Many of them repaired to the New Temple, where, cutting down the trees and levelling the walls of the garden, they set up their tents and pavilions in brave emulation of actual war. They performed their vigils in the Temple church, while the Prince of Wales, by command of the King his father, passed the night in prayer in Westminster Abbey.

On the following day, the King invested his son with the military belt, and assigned to him the duchy of Aquitaine. The Prince, being knighted, went to the Abbey that he might confer the like military honour on his companions. So close was the press of spectators round the high altar, that two knights were stifled, and several fainted, though each was supported by three knights of experienced prowess. The Prince, accompanied by his father and the chief nobility, at length reached the altar, and his guards made a passage for his friends to receive knighthood at his hands. After he had dubbed and embraced them all, his attendants introduced two swans covered with golden nets, which were adorned and embossed with studs of gold. This was the most joyous part of the ceremony in the eyes of the people, and their rude and joyous shouts drowned the clangor of the trumpets. The King, as before stated, vowed by heaven and the swans that he would go to Scotland, and even if he should die in the enterprise, he would avenge the death of Comyn and the violated faith of the Scots. He then adjured the Prince and the nobles, and his band of knights by their fealty and chivalry, that if he should die in his journey to Scotland, they would carry his body forwards, and never bury it till his son had established his dominion. Every heart assented to this high resolve, and the ceremony closed. The knights were feasted that day at the royal palace; and while they were quaffing muscadel in honour of chivalry and the ladies, the minstrels in their songs reminded them of their duty to pledge themselves before the swans to perform some rare feats of arms. The Prince vowed that he would never rest two nights in one place until he had performed his father's high behests; and the other knights made various vows for the promotion of the same object.*

The defeat of the English chivalry at the battle of Bannockburn, (24th June, 1315,) was the most remarkable circumstance in the reign of Edward II. On the preceding day, Douglas† and Sir Robert Keith, marshal of Scotland, were despatched by Robert Bruce from the main body of his army to descry whether the enemy was approaching.

"And soon the great host have they seen,
Where shields shining were so sheen,
And basinets burnished bright,
That gave against the sun great light,
They saw so fele‡ brawdyne§ banners,
Standards, and pennons, and spears,
And so fele‡ knights upon steeds,
All flaming in their weeds.
And so fele‡ batails,‖ and so broad,
And too so great room as they rode
That the maist host, and the stoutest
Of Christendom, and the greatest
Should be abaysit,¶ for to see
Their foes into such quantity."
The Bruce, vol. ii., p. 111.

The English vanguard, commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, soon came in general sight. The appearance of Edward's army is described by Barbour in a rich chivalric style.

"The sun was bright, and shined clear,
And armouris that burnished were,
So blomyt,** with the sun's beam,
That all the land were in a leme'††
Banners right fairly flawinand,‡‡
And pensels to the wind wawand.§§
Barbour, xi. 188—193.

Bruce was riding on a palfrey and marshalling his men, when Sir Henry de Bohun started from the opposite host, and careered his horse against him. Sir Henry was a fierce rather than a gallant

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 457, &c. Trevet, p. 343.

† This was the good Lord James of Douglas, of whom see p. 72, ante.

‡ Many. § Displayed.
‖ Battalions. ¶ Alarmed.
** Gleamed. †† Flame of fire.
‡‡ Flowing. §§ Waving.

Digitized by Google

knight, or he would not have pressed his war-steed upon a foe who was riding on a palfrey.* But his want of chivalric gallantry was justly punished.

"And when Glosyter and Hertfurd were,
With their battle approaching near,
Before them all there come riding,
With helm on head and spear in hand,
Sir Henry Boune, the worthy,
That was a wight knight, and a hardy,
And to the Earl of Hertfurd cousin;
Armed in arms good and fine;
Come on a steed, a bow-shot nere,
Before all other that there were.
And knew the King, for that he saw
Him so range his men in row:
And by the crown, that was set
Also upon his bacinet,
And towards him he went on haste.
And the King so apertly
Saw him come, forth all his feres†
In hy‡ to him the horse he steers.
And when Sir Henry saw the King
Come on forouting abaysing,§
To him he rode in full great hy‖
He thought that he should well lightly
Win him and have him at his will,
Since he him horsed saw so ill.
Sprent¶ they came unto a ling,**
Sir Henry missed the noble king.
And he, that in his stirrups stood,
With the axe, that was hard and good,
With so great mayn†† reached him a dint,
That neither hat nor helm might stynt,
The hewy dusche‡‡ that he him gave,
That near the head to the harness clave.
The hand-axe shaft fruschyt§§ in tow;
And he down to the yird gan go
All flatlyngs,‖‖ for him failed might.
This was the first stroke of the fight."
Barbour, vol. ii., p. 122.

* Sir Walter Scott has made King Edward the author of this unknightly conduct.

"'Knows't thou,' he said, 'De Argentine,
Yon knight who marshals thus their line?'—
'The token on his helmet tell
The Bruce my liege: I know him well.'—
'And shall the audacious traitor brave
The presence where our banners wave?'—
'So please my liege,' said Argentine,
'Were he but hors'd on steed like mine,
To give him fair and knightly chance,
I would adventure forth my lance.'—
'In battle-day,' the King replied,
'Nice tourney rules are set aside,
—Still must the rebel dare our wrath?
Set on—sweep him from our path.'
And as King Edward's signal, soon
Dash'd from the ranks Sir Henry Boune.'
The Lord of the Isles, canto vi., st. 14.

† Companions.
‡ Haste.
§ Without shrinking.
‖ Haste.
¶ Spurred.
** Line.
†† Moan.
‡‡ Heavy clash.
§§ Broken.
‖‖ Flat.

The fine generousness of chivalry was very nobly displayed in another circumstance which preceded the great battle. It was a main object with the English to throw succours into the castle of Stirling; and Edward, therefore, commanded Sir Robert Clifford and eight hundred horsemen to make a circuit by the low grounds to the east, and approach the castle. Bruce, in anticipation of the Englishman's purpose, had charged Randolph, who commanded his left wing, to prevent Stirling from being relieved; and when he saw the English troops holding on their gallant course unchecked, he cried, "A rose has fallen from thy chaplet, Randolph,"* and bitterly reproached him for his want of vigilance. Nothing but the utmost desperateness of valour could efface this shame; and gathering round him a few hundred bold spirits, the Scottish general advanced against the English. Clifford, in his pride of chivalry, thought that he could soon disperse a band of lightly-armed troops of foot-soldiers, who were now being marshalled into a circle with their spears resting on the ground, the points protruded on every side. The English charged, but the resistance was more gallant than what they had foreseen. Still, however, the Scots seemed gradually sinking under the force of numbers; and Douglas, who saw the peril, requested the King's permission to go and join him. "You shall not move from your ground," cried the King: "let Randolph extricate himself as he best may. I will not alter my order of battle, and lose the advantage of my position." But Douglas reiterated his request, and wrung leave from the King. He flew to the assistance of his friend. But before he reached him he saw that the English were falling into disorder, and that the perseverance of Randolph had prevailed over their impetuous courage. "Halt," cried Douglas, like a generous knight; "these brave men have repulsed the enemy; let us not diminish their glory by sharing it."

* "For the king had said him rudely,
That a rose off his chaplet
Has fallen; for quhar* he was set
To kep the way these men were past."
Barbour, vol. ii., p. 545—548.

* Where.

Digitized by Google

Of the battle of Bannockburn itself, little need be said by me, because there was not much chivalric character about it. Some historians describe the defeat of the English as having been principally occasioned by the Scottish cavalry throwing the rear of their archers into confusion. Others affirm that Bruce, seeing the inadequacy of his own cavalry to cope with that of the English, formed the battles or divisions of his army entirely of foot-soldiers, and dug trenches before his line, slightly covering them with turf and hurdles. The gallant knights of England, with the sun streaming on their burnished helms and gilt shields, advanced to charge the bristled front of the Scots; but the turf sunk beneath the pressure of their horses' feet, and men and their steeds lay at the mercy of their enemy. One or other of these circumstances turned the event of the battle, and the Scotch reserve being judiciously brought up, completed the victory. In every way the generalship of Bruce was admirable: but the fate of the battle reflects nothing upon the personal character of the English chivalry; for they were not worsted in an encounter of lance to lance, and horse to horse. The bravery of one English knight must not pass unrecorded. Sir Giles D'Argentyn, upon seeing some of his friends around him pause in alarm, cried that he was not used to fly, and spurring his war-steed into the thickest of the press, gallantly perished. Nor was this a solitary instance of courage; and even Edward seemed for a moment to be inspired with the fire of the Plantagenets. He dashed into the enemy's lines, and was by force drawn away by the Earl of Pembroke, when courage was evidently unavailing.*

Though the chivalric character was only for one moment of his life sustained by Edward II., yet it was too deeply fixed in the national mind to die on account of its neglect by any particular monarch. There is a singular circumstance on record illustrative of the power of this feeling. During his war with the barons, which his system of unprincipled favouritism had provoked, one of the lords refused the Queen the hospitality of his castle. This act of individual insult had general consequences. Disgusted with a cause which was blended with so much uncourtesy, barons and knights immediately flocked round the standard of the King; his arms completely triumphed, and the Spencers were recalled.*

* Mon. Malms., p. 149, &c. Moor, p. 594. Fordun, vol. xii., p. 20. Scala Chronica, p. 547. Dalrymple, vol. ii., p. 45, &c.

CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

Tournaments.—The Round Table.—Order of the Garter.—Courtesy of Edward.—Prevalence of Chivalric Taste among all Classes.—English Archers.—The Black Prince.—Story of the King's Chivalry.—England regarded as the Seat of Honour.—Instance of this.—Chivalric Heroes in this Reign.—The Gestes and Prowesses of Sir Walter Manny.—Chivalric Vow of Sir Walter.—He fights for the Love of his Lady.—His Rescue of two Brother Knights.—Instance of his joyous adventurousness.—His Gallantry before Auberoche.—His filial piety.—Story of chivalric Manners.—The Gentle disposition of Manny.—His Importance at Edward's Court.—His remarkable Sagacity.—His Liberality.—His Death in 1372.—Buried in the Charter-House.—Heroism of Sir James Audley.—His Generosity.—Memoir of Sir John Chandos.—His Gallantry to Ladies.—Amusing instance of the Pride of Knighthood.—The importance of his Counsel at Poictiers.—His Exploits in Brittany.—And in Spain.—Is made a Knight Banneret.—Quits the Black Prince.—But returns.—The remarkable Generousness of his Conduct to Lord Pembroke.—The last Circumstance of his Life.—General Grief at his Death.

THE sun of English chivalry reached its meridian in the reign of Edward III., for the King and the nobles all were knightly, and the image of their character was reflected in the minds of the people.†

* Trokelowe in Hearne, p. 52. Moor in Camden, Angl. Norm. p. 595.

† Warton (History of English Poetry, vol. i., p. 118, note, 8vo.) notices a passage in Piers Plowman, which shows how the reigning passion for chivalry infected the ideas and expressions of the writers of this period. The poet is describing the crucifixion, and speaking of the person who pierced our Saviour's side with a spear. This person our author calls a *knight*, and says, that he came forth *with his spear in hand and justed with Jesus*. Afterwards, for

Digitized by Google

Tournaments and jousts, for the amusement and in honour of the ladies, were the universal fashion of the time. In little more than one year, chivalric solemnities were held with unparalleled magnificence at Litchfield, Bury, Guildford, Eltham, Canterbury, and twice at Windsor.* The gay character of Edward and his court was pleasingly displayed in the spring of the year 1359, three years after the battle of Poictiers. A solemn tournament of three days' duration was proclaimed in London, and the lord mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, proposed to keep the field against all comers. The time arrived, the martial games were held, and all the honour of arms appeared to be of right due to the officers of the city. The victors then threw aside their shields and surcoats impressed with the city's bearings, removed their bevers, and King Edward, the Black Prince, the princes Lionel, John, and Edmund, and nineteen noble barons, were recognised.†

The round table at Kenilworth already mentioned was not a solitary instance of the love of romantic grandeur and gallantry among the people of England. Mortimer kept a round table of knights in Wales professedly in imitation of Arthur.‡ And afterwards Edward III. endeavoured to realise the golden imaginations of fable which had assigned one hundred and fifty knights as the complement of Arthur's chivalry.§ We are assured that the round table which Edward established at Windsor in 1344 described a circumference of six hundred feet: but it is more interesting to know that the nobility and knighthood of France, Germany, Spain, and other countries flocked to England on the invitation of the King, and that the chivalric bands at Windsor were graced by the presence of Queen Philippa and three hundred English ladies, who, in honour of the friendly union of knights, were all arrayed in splendid dresses of one form and fashion, and looked like the sisters of a military order. Policy was mixed with chivalric pride in Edward's plan; for he wished to retain in his service some of the foreign knights who repaired to the tournament at Windsor. But his intention to strengthen his chivalry was defeated by his rival Philip of Valois, who established also a round table, to which the cavaliers of the Continent could more easily repair than to that of Edward.* The knights of France were expressly forbidden by their king to attend the festivities of the round table at Windsor. The English monarch found, too, that he could not secure the attachment of stranger knights. That great chivalric principle, the companionship in weal or wo of men forming one society, was never regarded by them. Edward's table at Windsor was surrounded by gay cavaliers, who talked and sang of war and love, and then merrily returned to their own country full of courtesy to their royal host for his gallant bearing, but not disposed to renounce the chivalric associations of their native land. Edward then changed his design, and wished to establish an order of merit, that so "true nobility, after long and hazardous adventures, should not enviously be deprived of that honour, which it hath really deserved, and that active and hardy youth might not want a spur in the profession of virtue, which is to be esteemed glorious and eternal."† He accordingly assembled the nobility and knighthood of his realm, and showed them his intention of forming an especial brotherhood of knights, to be called Knights of the blue Garter, and of ordaining that a feast should be kept yearly at Windsor, on Saint George's day. The barons and cavaliers of Eng-

doing so base an act as that of wounding a dead body, he is pronounced a disgrace to *knighthood*, and our *champion chevaler chyeese knight* is ordered to yield himself recreant. fol. 88, b. So, too, in the Morte d'Arthur, Joseph of Arimathea is called the gentle knight that took down Jesus from the cross.

* Warton, vol. ii., p. 86.

† Barnes's Edward III., p. 564.

‡ Leland, Collect., vol. ii., p. 476.

§ Arthur went to his mete with many other kings. And there were all the knights of the Round Table except those that were prisoners, or slain at a recounter, thenne at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the hole nombre of an hundred and fifty, for then was the Round Table fully accomplished. Morte d'Arthur. The tale of Sir Gauth of Orkeney, c. 1. And see Index to this work, Article "Round Table."

* Walsingham, sub anno 1344. Ashmole on the Order of the Garter, cap. v., s. 2.

† Preface to the Black Book of the Order of the Garter.

Digitized by Google

land joyously agreed to his pleasure; for they were animated by this encouragement to military feats, and they saw that great amity and love would grow and increase among them. Twenty-five of the most valiant men of the kingdom were then chosen.*

The most noble order of Saint George, named the Garter, had, therefore, its origin in romance, in the wish to restore the chivalric dignity and splendour of ancient Britain. That view was afterwards blended with objects of policy which also were soon abandoned, and a fraternity of companions in arms was established for the promotion of chivalric honour. But though gallantry did not, as is commonly thought, actually found the order, yet perhaps it caused the union to receive the last clause of its title. Froissart describes the passion of Edward for the Countess of Salisbury, but is altogether silent on the story of her garter, a silence decisive of the incorrectness of the vulgar tale; for Froissart was intimately acquainted with the court of the English king, and his attention was always awake to circumstances of a gallant and romantic nature. It was quite in the spirit of those days for a band to be regarded as an excellent symbol of the friendly union which ought to exist between the knights companions; and if love had not been a chief feature in chivalry, the order might have been only called the Order of the Band. But gallantry came in, and claimed some share of chivalric honours. Ages of fastidious delicacy would have thought of a zone or girdle, but our simple minded ancestors regarded the garter as the wished for symbol. The well known motto of the Garter (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*) seems to apply, as Sir Walter Scott conjectures, to the misrepresentations which the French monarch might throw out respecting the order of the Garter, as he had already done concerning the festival of the round table.†

On the collar of the order something should be said. Warton appears to think that the earliest collar worn by the knights of the Garter was a duplication of the letter S, in allusion to the initial letter of the fair lady's name who, he supposes, gave rise to the fraternity of the most noble order of the Garter. But in truth no evidence exists that originally the members of the order wore any collar at all as knights of the Garter, though they certainly wore golden collars in their character of knights bachelors and knights banneret.

The favourite badge of the Lancastrian family was the letter S, sometimes single, and sometimes double, and the golden collar of esses became in time the general collar of English knights, and the silver collar of esses was worn by squires. The letter S was the initial letter of the sentence, "*Soveigne vous de moy.*" This was a very favourite motto in the fourteenth century, and was afterwards frequently introduced into collars which were formed of the fleur-de-souvenance, the forget-me-not of modern times. Whether at any period the golden collar of esses distinguished the knights of the Garter we know not. The collar worn in the present days, composed of garters with the image of Saint George dependent thereon, cannot be traced higher than the reign of Henry VIII.

The order was founded in honour of God, the Virgin Mary, Saint George the Martyr, and Saint Edward, king and confessor. The two saints were regarded as the particular patrons of the knights companions. The person that our an-

* Walsingham, p. 164. Froissart, c. 100.

† Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii., part 1, p. 139. As the story of Lady Salisbury's garter is fabulous, we must resort to some other conjectures for an explanation of the famous motto of the order, and the one cited in the text is extremely ingenious and plausible. With much less appearance of truth, Ashmole fancies that Edward by this motto reported shame and defiance upon him that should dare to think ill of so just an enterprise as he had undertaken for the recovery of his lawful right to the French crown (whose arms he had lately assumed); and that the magnanimity of these knights whom he had chosen into this order was such as would enable him to maintain that quarrel against all who durst think ill of it. Ashmole's Order of the Garter, p. 184. There never was a knight more fond of impresses, mottoes, and devices, than King Edward III. He not only stamped them upon his own armour and that of his horse, but on his apparel, beds and household furniture. "It is as it is," was one of these mottoes. Another was: —

"Ha! ha! the white swan,
By God's soul I am thy man."

Digitized by Google

cestors understood by the name Saint George is a point of doubt. Some modern writers have called him a sufferer in the persecutions of Diocletian, and others the flagitious George of Cappadocia, the Arian successor of Athanasius in the archbishoprick of Alexandria.* It is equally difficult to discover how the saint became invested with military glory. But, leaving such questions to martyrologists and legend-makers, it is sufficient for our purpose to observe that a person called Saint George was in very early ages regarded as the tutelary saint of England, and became therefore very naturally one of the heads of the new military order. His brother-protector Saint Edward soon fell from his lofty station: but at the time concerning which I am writing he was high in fame, for Edward III. was wont to invoke both him and the other patron-saint with perfect impartiality; and when he was cutting his way through a press of knights, one stroke of his sword was accompanied by the exclamation, "Ha, Saint Edward," and another by the cry, "Ha, Saint George."

To pursue, however, the general course of the chivalry of our Edward III. Nothing could be more beautiful than his courtesy on all occasions. It was particularly shown in his treatment of the hostages of the French king for the due performance of the treaty of Bretigny. He commanded his officers to deport themselves to those lords and their company courteously and favourably; and, accordingly, the French strangers sported without peril in London at their pleasure, and the great lords went hunting and hawking, and rode over the country, and visited ladies and damsels, without any control, so courteous and amiable was the King of England to them.* During all the tournaments that were held in his reign, he permitted his French, Scotch, and other prisoners, to share in the games, and sometimes he even furnished them with tourneying harness out of the royal armoury.†

The taste for chivalry among classes of people apparently little susceptible of its influence may be learned from the masquerading tournament of Edward; for knightly games must have been well known to the citizens of London, or the proclamation would not have been issued, that the lord mayor, aided by the court of aldermen and the sheriffs, would, on a certain day, hold a solemn tournament. The same taste was proved some years before, when the Black Prince entered London, with King John of France as his prisoner. The outsides of the houses were covered with hangings, wrought over with battles in tapestry, and the citizens exposed, in their shops, windows, and balconies, an incredible quantity of bows and arrows, shields, helmets, corselets, breast and back pieces, coats of mail, gauntlets, umbraces, swords, spears, battle-axes, armour for horses, and other armour.‡ It is also curious to notice, that on the evening preceding Candlemas-day, in the year 1377, one hunderd and thirty citizens of London, for the entertainment of the young prince, Richard, son of the nation's idol, the Black Prince, rode, disguised as knights, from Newgate to Kennington, where the court resided, attended with an innumerable multitude, bearing waxen torches, and playing various instruments of music.§

As the principal wars of Edward's time were waged with a chivalric people, the circumstances which surrounded them favoured the development of the chivalric qualities of the English character. I shall not repeat the political events of our glorious contests with France, nor describe, for the thousandth time, the battles of Cressy and Poictiers. but it may be mentioned, that the admirable marshalling of Edward's force on the field of Cressy was a high proof o his chivalric sageness, and mainly con-

* Gibbon is the chief supporter of the last hypothesis. In his text (vol. iv., c. 23), he states positively, that "the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and the Garter." In a note, however, he observes that this transformation is not given as absolutely certain, but as extremely probable. Few people read this note, and, perhaps, Gibbon did not intend they should. He wished to strike their attention by the sentence in his text, and he satisfied his conscience for literary honesty by writing the modification at the bottom of the page.

* Froissart, c. 213. † Barnes, p. 444.
‡ Knyghton, Chron. col. 2615.
§ Stow's Chronicle.

Digitized by Google

tributed to his victory over the forces of the King of France.

The battles of Cressy and Poictiers, however, were not entirely gained by the chivalry of England: the bow was a most important weapon in the English army. It had characterised the Normans, and been mainly instrumental in winning for them the battle of Hastings. It was afterwards used by the small landholder, the tenant in soccage, and the general mass of the people, while the lance was the weapon of the lord and the knight. The bow was the emblem of freedom, and the pre-eminence of our archers show that the political condition of England was superior, in the fourteenth century, to that of any continental nation.*

The arrow was of the remarkable length of a cloth-yard. The expression in the old ballad of Chevy-Chase,

> "An arrow of a cloth-yard long
> Up to the head drew he,"

marks the usage of our early ancestors; and that sentence of Lear, in Shakspeare's play, "Draw me a clothier's yard," shows that in the sixteenth century the national character had not been lost. It was fostered by every proper means: by royal command archery was practised in towns on holidays, after church; while coits, cock-fighting, and amusements with the ball, were strictly prohibited. Other nations drew the bow with strength of arm, but Englishmen with their whole vigour: they laid their body in the bow,† as an old writer has forcibly expressed the usage; and when in amusement they were exercising their skill, eleven-score yards was the least distance at which the mark was set up. No one could better shoot an arrow than a yeoman in the days of Edward III.: they were the most powerful attendants which our knights could boast of.

> "A yeomen had he, and servants no mo,
> At that time, for him lust to ride so;
> And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
> A sheaf of peacock's arwes bright and keen
> Under his belt he bare full thriftily.
> Well coude he dress his takel yemanly.
> His arwes dropped not with feathers lowe,
> And in his hand he bare a mighty bowe.
> A not-hed* had he with a brown visage,
> Of Wood-craft coude he well all the usage.
> Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,
> And by his side a sword and a bokeler;
> And on that other side a gay dagger,
> Harnessed well, and sharp as point of spere;
> A Cristofere on his breast of silver shene;
> An horn he bare, the baudrick was of green,
> A forster was he, soothly as I guess."†

The reader scarcely needs to be informed that the battle of Cressy by the French began with the confusion among the Genoese cross-bow men. The English archers then stepped forth one pace, and, as Froissart says, let fly their arrows so wholly, and so thick, that it seemed snow was piercing through heads, arms, and breasts. The French cavaliers rushed in to slay the Genoese for their cowardice, but the sharp arrows of the English slew them, and their horses too. The chivalry of the Black Prince decided the victory: the Earls of Flanders and Alençon broke through his archers, but deeper they could not penetrate; and in the personal conflict of the chivalries of the two nations, the English were conquerors.‡

At the battle of Poictiers, the English archers threw the French cavalry into confusion, by slaying the unmailed horses. True to say, as Froissart observes, the archers did their company that day great advantage; for when the Black Prince descended the hill on which he had posted himself, the archers were mingled with his chivalry, in true knightly fashion, and shot so closely to-

* "——These gallant yeomen,
England's peculiar and appropriate sons,
Known in no other land. Each boasts his hearth
And field as free as the best lord his barony,
Owing subjection to no human vassalage,
Save to their king and law. Hence are they resolute,
Leading the van on every day of battle,
As men who know the blessings they defend.
Hence are they frank and generous in peace,
As men who have their portion in its plenty.
No other kingdom shows such worth and happiness
Veil'd in such low estate."
Halidon Hill, act ii., sc. 2.

† This national characteristic is alluded to in Latimer's sermons, folio, 69, — a work not of very good promise for such matters.

* Hair cut short.

† Chaucer, Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, line 101, &c., &c.

‡ Froissart, c. 131.

Digitized by Google

gether, that none durst come within danger.*

The well-known conduct of the Black Prince to his prisoner, King John, after the battle—his waiting on him at table, saying that he was not sufficient to sit at the board with so great a man as the King—his riding through London to the Savoy, the French monarch mounted on a white and superbly equipped war-horse, while the Prince rode by his side on a little black palfrey—all this beautiful deportment proceeded from the modesty, the self-abasement of true chivalry, and from that kindly consideration which one knight always showed to his brother in arms.†

There were many circumstances in Edward's wars amply deserving of notice, as illustrative of national and personal character, but which have been passed over altogether, or but slightly regarded, by the general historians of England; some of whom, in their anxiety for chronological exactness, and others in their desire to make the matter in hand merely illustrative of a few political principles, have very ingeniously contrived to strip their subject of all its splendour, interest, and variety.

Three years after the battle of Cressy had given the town of Calais to the English, the Lord Geffray Charney, of France, endeavoured to regain it, by bribing the Governor, Amery de Puy, a Lombard. Edward, hearing of the treaty, sent for his officer from Calais to Westminster. When the King saw him, he took him apart, and said, "Thou knowest well I have given thee in keeping the thing in the world I love best next my wife and children, namely, the town and castle of Calais: and thou hast sold it to the Frenchmen; wherefore thou deservest to die."

Then the Lombard kneeled down, and said, "Noble king, I cry your mercy: it is true what you say; but, Sir, the bargain may well be broken, for as yet I have received never a penny."

The King, who had warmly loved the governor, replied, "Amery, I will that thou goest forward in thy bargain, and the day that thou appointest to deliver the town, let me have knowledge thereof before; and on this condition I forgive thee thy trespass."

Accordingly Amery returned to Calais, and continued the negotiation with Lord Geffray Charney. It was finally agreed between them that the surrender of Calais should take place on the night of the new year; and the governor, faithful to his allegiance, communicated the progress of the plot to Edward. The King immediately rode from London to Dover, with three hundred men-at-arms, and six hundred archers, and, crossing the sea, he reached Calais in the evening, and secretly lodged his men in the chambers and towers of the castle. He did not wish to head the emprise himself; and selecting Sir Walter Manny from his gallant band, as the prowest chevalier, he told him that he and his son, the Prince, would fight under his banner.

When the time for surrendering Calais approached, the Lord Geffray, having heard from Amery that matters were ripe, advanced from Arras, and sent before him twelve knights, and an hundred men-at-arms, to take possession of the castle. Amery admitted them over the bridge of the postern, receiving, at the same time, a bag containing twenty thousand crowns, the price of his treachery. He led the soldiers towards the donjon of the castle; and immediately King Edward and an hundred men, with swords and axes, furiously poured from it, shouting the war-cry, "Manny, Manny, to the rescue!" The Frenchmen were panic-struck by this wild sweep of war, and incontinently yielded themselves prisoners. Edward advanced to the Boulogne gate, where he found the Lord Geffray, who was anxiously expecting it to be opened; and his companions were driving away the tedious moments, by supposing that Amery, like a subtle and suspicious Lombard, was busy in counting his crowns.

The cry, "Manny to the rescue!" disturbed their jocularity, and grasping their swords, they saw a band of armed men issuing from the gate. In an instant the King, the Black Prince, the Staffords, the Suffolks, the Salisburys, the Beauchamps, the Berkeleys, all the

* Froissart, 163.
† Ibid., cc. 168, 174.

Digitized by Google

pride and flower of English chivalry stood before them. The Frenchmen did not decline the combat, and it was chivalrously maintained until a winter's return of morn. The English were finally victors. Of the single combats in which the cavaliers signified their valiancy, the fiercest occurred between the King and the Lord Eustace of Rybamount, a strong and hardy knight. Twice was Edward struck on his knees; but at last Eustace was worsted; and he yielded his sword to the King, saying, not knowing his royal quality, "Sir Knight, I yield me your prisoner."

The king treated his captives like brethren in arms, giving them a noble entertainment, and sitting at the table with them, while the Prince, the lords, and the knights of England, acted as attendants. After supper, and when the tables were removed, the King talked a while with his own knights, and then conversed with the Frenchmen. He gently reproved the Lord Geffray of Charney for an enterprise so unworthy of nobility and knighthood; and then going to Sir Eustace of Rybamount, he said to him, with all the fine frank joyousness of chivalry, "Sir Eustace, you are the knight in the world that I have seen most valiantly assail his enemies and defend himself; and I have never found a knight that ever gave me so much ado body to body as you have done this day, and therefore I give you the prize above all the knights of my own court." The King thereupon took from his head a chaplet of pearls, fair, goodly, and rich, and presented it to the knight, with the remark, "Sir Eustace, I give you this chaplet, for the best doer in arms this day of either party, and I desire you to wear it this year for the love of me. I know that you are fresh and amorous, and oftentimes among ladies and damsels. Say wheresoever you go that I gave it to you; and I free you from prison, and renounce your ransom. To-morrow, if it so please you, you shall depart."*

Here chivalry appeared in all its generousness, elegance, and refinement. How beautifully contrasted is Edward's deportment to Sir Eustace de Rybamount with his feelings towards Eustace de St. Pierre and his five fellow-burgesses, three years before, at the surrender of Calais to the English. Edward had no sympathy with their magnanimous devotion of themselves to save the lives of their fellow-citizens; no consideration of knightly mercy softened his mind; and it was only the supplication of his queen, who was in a state to move the sternest soul to grant her wishes, that restored his better nature. Before Edward's chivalry, however, he generally and finally condemned, let it be remembered that his severe losses of his own men had sorely grieved his mind against the people of Calais, and that at the commencement of the siege, when the captain of the town had driven from its gates all the poor and impotent, Edward not only granted them a free passage through his army, but gave them meat and drink and money.*

The court of the English king was regarded as the very judgment-seats of honour; an opinion of which a very curious proof exists. In the year 1350, a fierce war raged between the Soldan of Babylon and Constantine, King of Armenia; the former invading the dominions of the Armenian prince with vast and numerous armies, and the latter endeavouring, by the united strength of his own subjects, and Cypriots and Rhodians, to repel the violence of the heathen invaders, or at least to arrest their progress, which then began to threaten all Christendom. Among the many great men who, together with the Chris-

* Froissart, cc. 150, 152. "Messire Eustace vous estes le chevalier au monde, que veisse oncques plus vaillamment assailer ses ennemis, ne son corps, deffendre: ny ne me trouvay oncques en bataille ou je veisse, qui tant me donnast affaire, corps à corps, que vous avez huy fait. Si vous en donne le pris, et aussi sur tous les chevaliers de ma cour, par droit sentence. Adonc print le roy son chappelet, qu'il portoit sur son chef (qui estoit bon et riche) et le meit sur le chef de Monseigneur Eustace; et dit Monseigneur Eustace, je vous donne ce chappelet pour le mieux combattant de la jouence, de ceux de dedans et de dehors: et vous pui que vous le portez ceste année pour l'amour de moi. Je say bien que vous estes gai et amoureux, et que volontiers vous vous trouvez entre dames et damoiselles. Si dites, par tout la ou vous irez, que je le vous ay donné. Si vous quitte vostre prison, et vous en pouvez partir demain, s'il vous plaist.

* Froissart, cc. 133, 146.

Digitized by Google

tian princes, were engaged in this holy war, were a Cypriot knight named John de Visconti, a relation of the King of Cyprus, and a knight of France called Thomas de la Marche, bastard-brother to John de Valois, the French king. Both these knights held high commands in the Christian army. From certain information, or from jealousy, John de Visconti charged the bastard of France with treason: with having agreed, in consideration of a certain sum of gold to be paid unto him beforehand, in part of a greater sum to be paid afterwards, to betray the Christian army to the Turk. Thomas de la Marche, with all the confidence of virtue, boldly denied the charge; it was repeated, and again flung back in the accuser's face; opprobrious epithets were interchanged, and a challenge to mortal combat was given and accepted. The friends of the two knights, dreading the displeasure of the King of Cyprus and the King of France, and fearing that the consequences of a duel might be felt among themselves, compelled John de Visconti and Thomas de la Marche to agree to stand to the award which should be determined by the confederates in council. The judgment was, that they should carry letters importing their cause fully and clearly from the said Christian princes unto King Edward of England, and to submit themselves to be tried by combat before him, as the most worthy and honourable prince in all Christendom; they swearing to remain as perfect friends until that time.

Soon afterwards, they set sail for England, where they arrived in the beginning of September, and forthwith presented unto King Edward, in the names of the kings of Armenia and Cyprus and the rest of the princes and captains of the Christians, their letters, which contained a narrative of the whole dispute, and the conclusion, that the matter should be determined by combat before him as their judge. In the presence of the King and his court, Sir John de Visconti accused Sir Thomas de la Marche of his treasonable intent and purpose, challenging to prove it upon his body, and thereupon flinging down his gauntlet. Sir Thomas boldly took it up, and accepted the challenge in proof of his innocency. King Edward having read the letters, and seriously considered the whole matter, appointed a day for the decision of their quarrel in close field within the lists at his palace of Westminster.

On the day appointed they met accordingly, armed at all points, on horseback, the King, the Prince of Wales, and the whole court of England being spectators. Presently, upon sound of trumpet, a most gallant combat commenced between the two stranger knights. Both their spears were broken into splinters upon each other's shields, yet neither of them was cast from his saddle. Instantaneously, and, as it were, by mutual consent, they alighted, and drawing their good swords, renewed the combat on foot, till having with equal valour and discretion fought a considerable while, both their weapons became useless, and they were obliged to come to close grapple, and at length by wrestling both fell locked together, still contending for the victory. It was gained by Sir Thomas de la Marche, by means which, though lawful in the duel, would not have been permitted in the courtly joust and tournament. He had armed the joints of his gauntlet with sharp pricks of steel called gadlings, and he struck them with such force and frequency through the small distant bars of his antagonist's visor, that Visconti was compelled to call for mercy. The King thereupon threw down his warder, the marshal cried Ho! and the combat ceased. Edward adjudged the victory to the Frenchman, declaring that the vanquished was at his mercy, agreeably to the laws of arms.*

The court of Edward and his son was as chivalric as that of Arthur, and of much more interesting contemplation, from the pleasure of finding that the beauties of the chivalric character were not imaginary. If the Round Table boasted its Sir Tristram and its Sir Launcelot of the Lake, the order of the Garter possessed its Sir Walter Manny and its Sir John Chandos, whose lives were so brilliant and glorious that the golden age of chivalry seems not like the golden age of nations, a poet's dream.

In the suite of Philippa, daughter of

* Barnes's History of Edward III., p. 452, &c.

Digitized by Google

the Count Hainault, when in the year 1327 she came to England to be married to Edward III., was a gentleman of baronial rank, named Walter of Manny;* and it was not thought that he lost any quality of his birth by serving at her table as her carver.† He had been educated as a cavalier, and his military accomplishments were soon noticed by Edward.‡ He was knighted, and the ceremony was splendid, the dresses being selected from the royal wardrobe.§ When the chance of a war with France was freely talked of in London, and every man's mind was filled with hopes of honour, Sir Walter vowed before dames and lords of the court, that he would be the first knight to enter the enemy's territory,‖ and win either town or castle, and do some deeds of arms. He then went to Flanders, and on the defiances being declared between the French and English nations, he got together about forty spears, and, by riding through Brabant night and day, he soon reached Hainault. Mortaigne was, he heard, in the realm of France; and passing with the utmost speed through the wood of Blaton, he arrived at the wished for town before the sun arose, and by good chance he found the wicket of the gate open. Leaving a few of his company to keep the entrance, he went into the high street with his pennon before him, and reached the castle. He was then espied by the watch, who blew his horn, and shouted "Treason, treason!" It would have been the extreme of rashness for such a little troop as that of Sir Walter to have attempted to storm the castle. They therefore contented themselves with setting fire to some houses, and then quitted the town; and thus that noble and gentle knight Sir Walter Manny performed the vow which he had made to the dames and lords of England.*

Afterwards, (in the year 1342,) being high in favour with Edward, he was sent into Brittany, with a proud display of knights and archers, to aid the Countess of Mountfort, at that time besieged in her castle by the French. He was not long before he made a sally on the enemy, and with such effect, that he destroyed all their great engines of assault. The French knights, not anticipating so bold a measure, lay at some distance from their machines; but they soon advanced in formidable numbers. The English and Bretons retreated, however, fairly and easily, though the French pursued them with infuriate violence. It would not have been knightly for Sir Walter to have left the field without having right valiantly acquitted himself; and he exclaimed, "Let me never be beloved by my lady, unless I have a course with one of these followers."† He then set his spear in its rest, and so did many of his companions. They ran at the first comers. Then legs were

* There was a Lord of Manny, as well as Sir Walter, at Edward's court. The lord was a distinguished person, for he was among the bishops, and earls, and barons, who accompanied Edward to France, upon his doing homage for the duchy of Guienne. St. Palaye has confounded the lord and the knight, and made but one of them. He overlooked the hundred and second chapter of Froissart, wherein the baron and the knight are separately and distinctly mentioned. There was also another Manny, called the courageous Manny. He was knighted by Sir Eustace Dambreticourt before a battle, and after fighting most valiantly he was left for dead in the field. Froissart shall tell the remainder of the story. "After this discomfiture, and that all the Frenchmen were departed, the courageous Manny being sore hurt and near dead, lift up his head a little, and saw nothing about him but dead men lying on the ground round about him. Then he arose as well as he might and sat down, and saw well how he was not far from the fortress of Nogent, which was English; then he did so much, sometimes creeping, sometimes resting, that he came to the foot of the tower of Nogent: then he made tokens to them within, showing how he was one of their companions; then certain came down to the tower to him, and bare him into the fortress, and dressed his wounds, and there he governed himself so well that he was healed." Froissart, c. 199.

† Froissart, c. 19.

‡ Ibid., cc. 24, 26.

§ Appendix, No. xxiv., to Anstis's History of the Knighthood of the Bath.

‖ "Mais il dit à aucuns de ses plus privés, qu'il avoit promis en Angleterre devant les dames et seigneurs, qu'il seroit le premier qui entreroit en France, en prendroit chastle ou forte ville, et y feroit aucunes appertises d'armes, c. 36.

* Froissart, c. 36.

† Quand Messire Gautier veit ce, il dit, j'amais ne soye salué de madame et chere amie, se je réntre en chastel n'en forteresse, jusques à tant que j'aye l'un de ces venans verse. Froissart, c. 82.

Digitized by Google

seen turned upwards, knights were taken and rescued, and many rare deeds of arms were done by both parties. Afterwards the English slowly retired to the castle, and the French to their tents.*

Sir Walter, in all his measures of succour to the Countess of Brittany, showed himself one of the prowest knights of the age; but no act of his valour was so interesting as his rescue of two brother-knights, whom an uncourteous cavalier, called Sir Loyes of Spain, had condemned to death.† Sir Walter said to his companions, "It would be great honour for us if we could deliver out of danger yonder two knights; and even if we should fail when we put it in adventure, yet King Edward, our master, will thank us, and so will all other noble men. At least, it shall be said, how we did our utmost. A man should peril his body to sáve the lives of two such valiant knights."

So generous an emprise was willingly undertaken: the greatest part of his force attacked the enemy's camp, while Sir Walter himself, with a chosen band, went round to the quarter where, by the custom of war, the prisoners were kept. He found there the two knights, and he immediately set them upon good steeds, which he had brought with him for their use, and, shaking them by the hand he made them gallop to a place of safety.‡ The object of his expedition into France, namely, the succour of the Countess of Montfort, being accomplished,§ Sir Walter recrossed the seas, and went to London.

In the year 1344 he was despatched into Gascony with the Earl of Derby and Lancaster, the Earl of Pembroke, and other noble peers of England, as one of the marshals of the host. Manny inspired and directed every enterprise. From the reports of his spies regarding Bergerac, he thought the place was pregnable. Being one day at dinner with the Earl of Derby, he exclaimed, with a cup of rich Gascon wine in his hand, "If we were good men-of-arms, we should drink this evening with the French lords in Bergerac." This bold and manly sentiment was loudly applauded by his brother-knights; tables and benches were overthrown in their haste to quit the hall and don their harness, and in a few moments they bestrode their noble steeds. The Earl of Derby was right joyous at the sight of the gallant assemblage, and crying, "Let us ride to our enemies in the name of God and Saint George," banners were displayed and the English cavaliers urged their horses to speed. They soon reached the fortress of Bergerac. The pleasant wish of Sir Walter was not realised; for night closed upon the combatants, without their drinking the wines of Gascony together. All the next day was spent, likewise, in manœuvres, and in jousts *à l'outrance*, and in the evening the French men-at-arms stole away from Bergerac. The common people sent their submissions to the Earl of Derby, who, saying, "He that mercy desireth mercy ought to have," made them swear faith and homage to the King of England.*

No circumstance in this war was of more importance than the relief of the castle of Auberoche, then beleaguered by the French. The Earl of Derby had with him only three hundred spears, and six hundred archers, the rest of his force being dispersed over the country. The French could count about ten or twelve thousand; but the English, undismayed by numbers, thought it was a great disgrace to abandon their friends in Auberoche. The Earl of Derby and his knights were then in a wood, two little leagues from Auberoche; and while waiting for the Earl of Pembroke, they left their horses to pasture.

While they were loitering in the fields, in this state of restlessness, Sir Walter Manny said to his companions, "Let us leap on our horses and wend our way under the covert of this wood till we arrive at the side which joins the Frenchmen's host; and then let us put our spurs into our horses, and cry our cries. Our enemy will then be at supper, and, not expecting us, you shall see them so

* Froissart, c. 82.
† See 57. ante.
‡ Froissart, c. 87.
§ See p. 84, ante.

* Froissart, c. 103. Le Comte D'Erby dit, qui merci prie merci doit avoir. This sentence, I suppose has escaped the notice of writers who have represented the sole amusement of knights to have consisted in cutting the throats of common people.

Digitized by Google

dicomfited, that they shall not be able to preserve any array." A scheme so adventurous was readily embraced: every man mounted his horse; and the troop coasted the wood till they came near the French, who were going to supper, and some, indeed, were already seated at the tables. The scene of festivity was broken up when the English displayed their banners and pennons, and dashed their spurs into their horses, and raising the cry, "A Derby, a Derby!" rushed among them, overthrowing tents and pavilions. When the French recovered from their astonishment, they mounted their steeds, and rode into the field in military array; but there they found the English archers ready to receive them, and those bold yeomen shot so fiercely that they slew many men and horses. On the other side of the castle there was a noble display of French chivalry; and the Englishmen, having overcome those who were near the tents, dashed boldly among them. Many noble deeds of arms were done, knights were taken and rescued, and the English cause triumphed; for the knights of the castle had armed themselves, and now issued forth and rushed into the thickest of the press. Then the Englishmen entered into Auberoche; and the Earl of Derby gave a supper to the earls and viscounts who were prisoners, and to many of the knights and squires, lauding God, at the same time, that a thousand of his own nation had overcome many thousands of their enemies, and had rescued the town of Auberoche, and saved their companions that were within, who, in all likelihood, would have been taken within two days.

The next morning, at sunrise, the Earl of Pembroke reached the castle with his company of three hundred spears, and four thousand archers; and his personal chivalry was mortified that so fine a deed of knighthood had been done without him; and he said to the Earl of Derby, "Certainly, cousin, you have shown me great uncourtesy to fight with our enemies without me. You sent for me, and might have been sure I would not fail to come."

"Fair cousin," quoth the Earl of Derby, "we greatly desired to have had you with us: we tarried all day till it was far past noon, and when we saw that you did not come, we did not dare to abide any longer, for if our enemies had known of our coming, they would have had great advantage over us, but now we have the advantage over them." The Earl of Pembroke was well contented with this fair reply, and gallantly fought with his brother noble during the remainder of the war.*

We need not describe Sir Walter's feats of arms before La Reole, besieged by the Earl of Derby; but when the town surrendered, a little circumstance occurred beautifully illustrative of the character of our knight. His father had been murdered near that place, as he was making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James, in Spain, and had been buried in a little chapel in the field which then was without the town of La Reole, but was inclosed within the walls when the Earl of Derby conquered it. Sir Walter inquired if there was any one who could show him his father's tomb, offering a hundred crowns for his knowledge and labour. A man, grey and bent with age, went to the knight and declared, "Sir, I think I can bring you near the place where your father was buried." Manny then, in his joy at the promise, answered, "If your words be true I will keep covenant, and more."

The townsman led him to the place of sepulture; and they found a little tomb of marble which the servants of the deceased pilgrim had respectfully lain over him. The old man, pointing to it exclaimed, "Sir, under that tomb lies your father." Then the Lord of Manny read the scripture on the tomb which was in Latin;† and finding that his guide had declared the truth, he gave him his reward. He afterwards caused the bones of his father to be taken up, and removed to Valenciennes, in the county of Hainault. There his obse-

* Froissart, c. 107.

† This is Lord Berners's rendering of the passage. The phrase "par un sien clerc" had crept into some editions of Froissart; and Mr. Johnes's translation is, "Sir Walter caused the inscription to be read to him by a clerk." This, perhaps, was necessary, as the inscription was in Latin, for heroes have not been famous for their clerkship. But the inference which some writers have drawn, that he could not read at all, is perfectly unwarrantable.

Digitized by Google

quies were right sacredly performed: the helmet, the sword, the gauntlet, the spurs, and the tabard were hung over his grave, and as long as the family of Manny lived in that country, sad and solemn priests yearly chanted masses for his soul.†

Sir Walter so manfully defended the castle of Aguillon, that the Duke of Normandy was compelled to raise the siege. The battle of Cressy had just been fought, and our knight was anxious to visit his sovereign, Edward. He fell into communication with a cavalier of Normandy, who was his prisoner, and demanded of him what money he would pay for his ransom. The knight answered, he would gladly give three thousand crowns.

"Well," quoth Sir Walter, "I surely know that you are a kinsman to the duke of Normandy, and so warmly beloved by him, that were I to press you, I wot in sooth he would gladly pay ten thousand crowns; but I shall deal otherwise with you. You shall go to the Duke, your Lord, upon your faith and promise, and get a safe-conduct for myself and twenty of my companions to ride through France to Calais, paying courteously for all our expenses; and if you can procure this from the Duke, or the King, I will willingly remit your ransom, for I greatly desire to see the King my master. If you cannot do this, return hither in a month, and consider yourself as my prisoner."

The knight was well contented, and went to Paris to the Duke, his lord; and having obtained the passport, he returned with it to Sir Walter, who acquitted him of his ransom. Manny commenced his journey, and proceeded safely till he reached Orleans, where he was seized by the officers of the King of France and taken to Paris.

This circumstance was reported to the Duke of Normandy, who went to the King, his father, and entreated him, for the honour of chivalry, to release Sir Walter. He was for a long while inexorable, for he wished to destroy him whom he called his greatest foe; but, at last, good counsel prevailed with him, and Manny was delivered out of prison. He dined with the French monarch, who deported himself with knightly generosity. He entertained the Englishman right nobly, and gave him a distinguished seat on the dais. He also presented to him jewels to the value of a thousand florins: which Sir Walter received, only upon the condition of having liberty to return them, if his master, the King of England, did not approve of his retaining them; and the French King declared that he spoke like a noble knight.

Sir Walter then recommenced his journey, and soon reached Calais. Edward welcomed him; but when he heard of the presents he said, "Sir Walter, you have hitherto truly served us, and shall continue to do so, we trust. Return the gifts to King Philip; you have no cause to keep them: thank God! we have enough for ourselves and for you; and we intend to do much good to you for the service you have rendered us."

Sir Walter immediately gave those jewels to a cousin of his, named Sir Mansac, and said, "Ride into France, to the King, and commend me to him, and say, that I thank him a thousand times for his gift; but as it is not the pleasure of the King my master, that I should keep it, I send it to him again."

Sir Mansac, therefore, rode to Paris, and had his royal audience. The King would not accept the jewels, but pressed them upon the knight who, less conscientious than his cousin, thanked his Grace, and was not disposed to say nay.*

Sir Walter remained with his sovereign during the memorable siege of Calais; and when the inhabitants proposed to capitulate, it was his counsel that swayed with Edward to offer mercy to the town, on the surrender of six of its chief burgesses, instead of requiring general submission. Though Eustace de St. Pierre and his noble companions were saved by the tears and entreaties of Philippa, yet it was that gentle knight, Sir Walter Manny, who first endeavoured to turn aside the fierce wrath of the King. "Noble Sir," said he, "refrain your courage. You have the reputation of nobleness; therefore do not any thing that can blemish your renown. Every man will say it is great

* Froissart, c. 110.

* Froissart, c. 135.

Digitized by Google

cruelty to put to death such honest persons, who, from their own noble feelings, to save their companions, have placed themselves in your power."*

Sir Walter lost nothing of Edward's consideration by this contradiction of his humour. But he continued in such favour, that he was permitted to marry a lady related to the royal family:† he was invested with the Garter; and was summoned to parliament among the barons of England, from the twenty-first to the forty-fourth year of Edward's reign.‡ He was among the English lords who signed the treaty of Bretigny in the year 1360; and I regret that he was one of Edward's council who advised the sending of succours to the Black Prince, when he was about to assist Peter the Cruel. It is more pleasing to contemplate our cavalier on the battle-plain than in the hall of deliberation. He was, to the height, a sage and imaginative soldier; skilful as well as brave in battle.

When the war between England and France was renewed, in the year 1369, the Duke of Lancaster (late Earl of Derby) prevented the Duke of Burgundy's descent upon the English shores, by landing a small army at Calais, and ravaging the country near Boulogne. The Duke of Burgundy commanded the heights of Tournehem: the English were in the neighbourhood, and a battle was daily expected. It was feared, rather than desired, by the English; for their handful of men were opposed by more than four thousand French knights. The Duke of Burgundy could not engage without the king's permission; but the policy of Charles forbad a battle, and the Duke then desired leave to retire: the king consented. One night, fires were lighted, and there was an unwonted stir amidst the French camp. Such of the English as were near it were roused from sleep. They awoke the Lord Robert Namur, who immediately armed himself, and, preceded by a man bearing his banner, went to the tent of the Duke of Lancaster, who had been already disturbed. The English lords, one by one, drew about the Duke, ranging themselves, from the force of habit, fair and softly in battle order, without any noise or light, and placing the archers in such a form as to be ready to receive an attack by the French. No attack was, however, made; and, after waiting two hours, the Duke consulted with his lords. It was the sage opinion of Manny that the French had fled, and he advised Lancaster to pursue them. But the Duke declined this course; for he said he never could believe that so many valiant men-of-arms and noble knights would so shamefully depart. As soon as morning arose, it was discovered, however, that the French camp was deserted; and the Duke of Lancaster repented that he had not followed the counsel of his experienced friend.

Such was Sir Walter Manny; gallant, hardy, adventurous, and sage. Something still was wanting to the beautiful perfection of his character; for courtesy to the ladies, and bravery and skill in the field, did not of themselves constitute the preux chevalier. Liberality was the graceful ornament of the knightly character; and the charitable annals of the city of London place this crown on the brow of our noble representative of English chivalry.

During a plague in England, in the year 1348, London and its vicinity were the chief places of suffering; and as no church-yard could contain the victims, the Bishop of London bought a piece of ground called *No Man's Land*,* and consecrated it for burials. In the next year, Sir Walter Manny materially added to the charities of the bishop; for he purchased, and caused to be consecrated to the same object, thirteen acres and one rod of ground adjoining to No Man's Land, and lying in a place called Spittle Croft, because it belonged to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. In the very year of the purchase, the purpose seemed accomplished, for (according to certain charters of Edward III., and an inscription on the cross remaining in Stow's

* Froissart, c. 146.

† She was the Lady Margaret, daughter and heiress of Thomas Plantagenet, surnamed of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, and uncle to Edward III.

‡ Dugdale.

* The reader may, reasonably enough, inquire who could have been the vendor? I cannot tell him: I can only copy Stow in these matters.

Digitized by Google

time) fifty thousand people were buried there. Sir Walter built a chapel in the cemetery; and, in the year 1371, he founded a house of Carthusian monks, by the appellation of the Salutation of the Mother of God, to advance charity, and administer the consolations of religion.*

The last circumstance of his tale shall be told in the fitting strain of Froissart. "That same season (1372) died the gentle knight, Sir Walter Manny, in the city of London, whereof all the barons of England were right sorry, for the truth and good counsel that they had always seen and heard in him. He was buried, with great solemnity, in the monastery of the Charter-house, near London; and at the day of his obsequy there were present the King and all his children, and all the prelates, barons, and knights of England. His possessions, both in England and beyond the sea, fell to the Earl of Pembroke, who had married the Lady Anne, his daughter and heir."†

Among the flower of Edward's chivalry, Sir James Audley must be mentioned; not, indeed, that a detailed history of his exploits would be interesting; but there was one series of circumstances in his life honourable to his name and the chivalric character, and distinct and peculiar from every thing else in the manners of other ages.

Immediately before the battle of Poictiers, Sir James said to the Black Prince, "Sir, I have always truly served my Lord your father, and you also, and I shall do so as long as I live; and, to prove my disposition, I once made a vow that the first battle wherein either the King, your father, or any of his sons, should be engaged, I would be one of the first setters on, or I would die in the endeavour. Therefore, I request your Grace, in reward for any service that ever I did to the King your father, or to you, that you would give me license to depart from you, in order that I may accomplish my vow."

The Prince accorded to his desire; and, taking him by the hand, exclaimed, "Sir James, may God give you this day grace to be the prowest knight of all my host."

Audley then departed, and set himself in front of the English battles, accompanied only by four squires, who had sworn never to desert him.

He was anticipated in his gallant purpose by the Lord Eustace Damberticourt, whose chivalry was inspired by the lady Juliana;* but he continued in the front of the battle, performing marvels of arms. He lost no valuable moments in taking prisoners, but when he had disarmed one adversary he pressed forwards to another. He was severely hurt, both in the body and in the face; and, at the conclusion of the mêlée, his four squires took him out of the battle, and, laying him under a hedge, they bound up his wounds.

Edward soon inquired after the fate of his gallant friend; and Sir James, expressing his joy that his Prince should think of so poor a knight as he was, called eight of his servants, and made them bear him in a litter to the royal tent.

The Prince took him in his arms, and, embracing him with true fraternal affection, said, "Sir James, I ought greatly to honour you, for your valiantness this day has passed the renown of us all."

"Sir," answered the knight, with true chivalric modesty, "you say as it pleaseth you. I would it were so; but if I have this day advanced myself to serve you, and to accomplish my vow, no prowess ought to be reputed to me."

"Sir James," replied the Prince," I and all my knights consider you as the best doer in arms this day; and, in order that you may the better pursue these wars, I retain you for ever as my knight,

* Stow's London, book 4, c. 3. Maitland's History of London, p. 661. This was the state of the Charter-house till the suppression of the monasteries, in the reign of Henry VIII. Its annual value was 642*l.* It was given to Sir Thomas Audley, speaker of the House of Commons, with whose only daughter it went, by marriage, to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and from him, by descent, to Thomas Earl of Suffolk. In the time of James I. it was purchased by that "right phœnix of charity," Thomas Sutton, citizen and girdler, for the large sum of 13,000*l.*; and he converted the buildings and gardens into a hospital for the relief of aged men, education of youth, and maintaining the service of God.

† Froissart, 286.

* See p. 72.

Digitized by Google

with five hundred marks of yearly revenue."

Sir James, after expressing his thanks, was taken back to his tent. He then called the four squires before him, and resigned to them the Prince's gift, saying, it was to their valiantness that he owed it. The Prince soon heard of this noble action, and, sending for him, inquired why he renounced his kindness. Sir James craved pardon for his conduct, but affirmed he could do no otherwise; for his squires had that day several times saved his life, and enabled him to accomplish his vow. Edward's nobleness disdained any feeling of personal offence; and, in generous emulation of his friend's liberality, he made in his favour a new grant, more valuable than the former one.*

But of all the bold and protruding characters of the court of Edward III., none was more distinguished for the greatness and variety of his exploits than that sage and valiant knight, Sir John Chandos. He was the descendant of a Norman family, attached to William the Conqueror, and which had been renowned in every age of its history.† While only a squire, he accompanied Edward III. in his first war in France; and, at the siege of Cambray, he amazed the prowest knights by the goodly feats of arms done between him and a squire of Vermandois. At the battle of Vironfosse, immediately afterwards, he was stationed near the person of his sovereign, and, for his valour on that occasion, he received knighthood from the royal sword.‡ Like his friend, Sir Walter Manny, he was gentle, as well as valiant; and it was Chandos that, with another cavalier, saved the ladies of the castle of Povs from the brutal assault of the rabble.§ He was in the van, with the Black Prince, at the battle of Cressy; and, at the battle of Poictiers, he never quitted his side.

On the day that preceded this last great event an amusing proof occurred of the pride of knighthood, regarding armorial bearings. Sir John Chandos, on the part of the English, and the Lord of Claremont for the French, had been reconnoitering the other's forces; and, as they returned to their respective hosts, they met, and were mutually astonished that each bore the same armorial emblem.

The Lord of Claremont exclaimed, "Chandos, how long have you taken on you to bear my device?"

"Nay, you bear mine," replied the English knight; "for it is mine as well as yours."

"I deny that," observed the Lord of Claremont; "and were it not for the truce that this day is between us, I would prove immediately that you have no right to bear my device."

"Sir," rejoined Chandos, with the calmness of truth and bravery, "you shall find me to-morrow ready to prove it is mine, as well as yours."

Claremont passionately closed the conference by saying, "these are common words of you Englishmen; for you can invent nothing new; but you take for your own whatever you see handsome belonging to others."*

At the battle of Poictiers the counsel of Chandos was important to the fate of the day: for when the English archers had thrown the French into confusion, he said to the Black Prince, "Sir, take your horse and ride forth; this day is yours. Let us press forwards to the French king's battle, for there lies the stress of the matter. I think, verily, by his valiantness, he will not fly. I trust by the grace of God and St. George, that we shall take him; and, Sir, I heard you say that this day I should see you a good knight." It was this advice which guided the courage of Edward, and the victory was England's.

* Ashmole's History of the Garter, c. 26, s. 3. Froissart, cc. 142, 147.

† Dugdale, Baronage, i., 503.

‡ Authorities in Ashmole, p. 702.

§ Froissart, c. 125. See the first part of this work, p. 78.

* Froissart, c. 161. Monseigneur Jehan de Clermont dit, Chandos, ce sont bien les parolles de vos Anglos, qui ne savent adviser riens de nouvel; mais quant, qu'ils voyent, leur est bel. This is a very curious proof of the antiquity of the common remark that Englishmen are a borrowing and improving people, and not famous for originality of invention. It might be contended, but not in this place, that we are both. And here I will transcribe another sentence of Froissart more characteristic and true. "Les Anglois, selon leur coutume se divertirent moult tristement."

Digitized by Google

Nothing remarkable is related of Chandos for nine years after the battle of Poictiers. In 1365 he was the hero and counsellor of the Earl of Mountfort in his war with the Earl of Elois. Mountfort took no measures which were not of his suggestion, or met not with his judgment. Chandos was a valiant as well as a sage knight; for at the battle of Auray his mighty curtal-axe battered many a helm of the French. The fate of this battle fixed his friend of Mountfort in the dukedom of Brittany; and the opinion of the French lords, knights, and squires, the victory had been gained by the skill and high prowess of Chandos.*

He was seneschal of Aquitain, and of all those countries secured to the English by the treaty of Bretigny. Together with Sir Thomas Phelton he was summoned into Angouleme to advise the Black Prince regarding the affairs of Spain. The deposed king had arrived at Bourdeaux; and Edward, resolving to assist him, sought to fortify his determinations by the judgment of his friends. Chandos and his counsel earnestly endeavoured to change his resolve. When, indeed, no considerations could shake the purpose of the Black Prince, our knight accompanied him into Spain, his duties to his liege lord demanding his military service.

Before the battle of Naveret he took the rank and title of knight baneret. When the sun arose on that memorable day, it was a great beauty to behold the battles or divisions of the Black Prince's army and their brilliant harness glittering with its beams. The hostile forces slowly approached each other. Edward with a brief train of knights ascended a small hill, and clearly saw their enemy marching straight towards them. The prince was then followed by his army; and when they had reached the other side of the hill they formed themselves in dense array, and each man buckled on anew his armour and dressed his spear.

Sir John Chandos advanced in front of the battles with his banner uncased in his hand. He presented it to the prince, saying, "Sir, behold, here is my banner. I require you to display it abroad, and give me leave this day to raise it, for, Sir, I thank God and you, I possess land and heritage sufficient to maintain it withal."

The prince and King Peter took between their hands the banner, which was blazoned with a sharp stake gules, on a field argent, and after having cut off the end to make it square they spread it abroad; and the Prince delivered it to Chandos, saying, "Sir John, behold your banner, and God send you joy and honour, and strength, to preserve it!"

Chandos bowed, and after thanking the prince, he went back to his own company, and said, "Sirs, behold my banner and yours, keep it as your own."

They took it and were right joyful thereof, declaring that, by the pleasure of God and St. George, they would keep and defend it to the utmost of their power.

The banner was then placed in the hands of a worthy English squire, called William Allestry, who bore it that day and acquitted himself right nobly.

In that battle, Chandos counselled the Duke of Lancaster sagely as at the battle of Poictiers he had counselled Edward. He performed also wonders in arms, for he was a great and mighty knight, and well formed of all his limbs; but he adventured himself so far that he was closed in among his enemies, and at length pressed to the earth. A Spaniard of gigantic stature fell upon him with dreadful force; but Sir John drew a knife from his bosom, which he recollected he had about him, and struck his foeman so fiercely in the back and on the sides, that he wounded him to death as he lay on him. Sir John turned him over, and rose quickly on his feet, and his men-at-arms at that time joined him, they having with much difficulty broken through the press when they saw him felled.*

Chandos had not succeeded in dissuading the Prince of Wales from his Spanish war, and he failed also in withdrawing him from the more fatal project of taxing beyond usage his French dominions. Finding him resolved in his purpose, and not wishing to bear any blame or reproach about the matter, Sir John took his leave of the prince, and made his excuse to go into Normandy to visit the land of St. Savour le

* Froissart, c. 226.

* Froissart, c. 237.

Digitized by Google

Viscount, whereof he was lord, for he had not been there for several years. When the war so fatal to England's power in France broke out, the Black Prince wrote to Chandos to join him without delay. Sir John immediately went to Angouleme, and his liege lord joyfully received him. He was made Seneschal of Poictou at the request of the barons and knights of that country.

His deeds of arms equalled his former fame, but it was his chivalric generosity that was most striking, and the circumstances which accompanied the appearance of that feature of his character are very interesting. He wished the Earl of Pembroke, who was in garrison at Mortaygne, to accompany him in an enterprise into the French territory. The Earl was well content to have ridden forth; but some of the knights of his counsel broke his purpose, and said, "Sir, you are but young, and your nobleness is to come; and if you put yourself into the company of Sir John Chandos, he shall have the reputation and voice of it, for you will be regarded only as his companion: therefore, Sir, it is better for you, since you are a great lord, that you perform your enterprises by yourself, and let Sir John Chandos perform his; for in comparison with your estate, he is but a knight bachelor."

The Earl of Pembroke accordingly excused himself; and Sir John Chandos, unaided by him, went into Anjou, accompanied by three hundred spears of knights and squires, and two hundred archers. He achieved all his emprises; and hearing at last that Sir Louis of Sancerre, the Marshal of France, with a great number of men at war, was at Hay in Touraine, he wished to cope with him; but as his own force was inadequate to so great an exploit, he sent word of his intention to the Earl of Pembroke, desiring him to repair with his soldiers to Chatelterault.

Chandos the herald took the message; but the Earl by counsel of his knights again refused. The herald repaired to Sir John at Chatelterault, and the enterprise was broken up in consequence of the presumption and pride of the Earl of Pembroke: Chandos gave leave to most of his company to depart, and he himself went to Poictiers. Some of his men joined the Earl of Pembroke; who, at the head of three hundred knights and squires, committed great destruction in Anjou, and returned with immense booty into Poictou.

The Frenchmen thinking it a more easy chevisance to discomfit him than Sir John Chandos, assembled seven hundred soldiers from all the garrisons in the country, and Sir Louis of Sancerre took the command. The Earl of Pembroke heard nothing of the enemy, and not having the vigilance of Sir John Chandos he took no pains to inquire. The English were one day reposing in a village called Puirenon, in the territory of Poictou, when suddenly the Frenchmen came into the town, their spears in their rest, crying their cry, "Our Lady of Sancerre, for the Marshal of France." The English were dressing their horses, and preparing their suppers, when they were thus unexpectedly assailed. Several were killed, all the plunder was retaken, many prisoners were made, and the Earl of Pembroke and some of his knights and archers saved themselves in a preceptory of the Templars. The Frenchmen assaulted it gallantly, and it was as gallantly defended, till night put an end to the assault.

The English were so severely straitened for provisions, that they knew they must speedily surrender, unless Chandos came to their succour. A squire, who professed to know the country, offered to go to Sir John, and he accordingly left the fortress when the French had retired to rest. But he soon lost his road, and did not recover it till morning.

At day-break the French renewed their assaults, and mounted the walls with pavesses to defend their heads from the missiles of the English. The Earl of Pembroke and his little band fought so bravely, from morning until noon, that the French were obliged to desist, and to resort to the uncavalier-like mode of worsting their gallant foes by sending to the neighbouring villages for pikes and mattocks, that they might undermine and break down the wall.

Then the Earl of Pembroke called a squire to him, and said, "Friend, take my courser, and issue out at the back postern and ride strait to Poictiers, and show Sir John Chandos the state and

Digitized by Google

danger we are in, and recommend me to him by this token," added the Earl, taking a ring from his finger: "deliver it to him, for Sir John knows it well."

The squire took the ring, and immediately mounting his courser, fled through the postern, thinking he should achieve great honour if he could reach Sir John Chandos.

The first squire having lost so much time in the confusion of the night did not arrive at Poictiers till nine in the morning. He found Sir John at mass; and, in consequence of the importance of his message, he disturbed his devotions.

Chandos's feelings had been severely offended by the pride and presumption of the Earl of Pembroke, and he was in no great haste to relieve him. He heard the mass out. The tables were then arranged for the noon repast.

The servants, among whom the message of the squire had been bruited, inquired of Sir John if he would go to dinner. He replied, "Yes; if it were ready."

He went into the hall, and knights and squires brought him water. While he was washing, the second squire from the Earl of Pembroke, pale, weary, and travel-soiled, entered the hall, and knelt before him, and took the ring out of his purse, and said, "Right dear Sir, the Earl of Pembroke recommends himself to you by this token, and heartly desires your assistance in relieving him from his present danger at Puirenon."

Chandos took the ring; but instead of calling his friends to arm, he coldly observed, that it would be difficult to assist the Earl if the affair were such as the squire had represented it. "Let us go to dinner," said he; and accordingly the knights sat down.

The first course was eaten in silence, for Chandos was thoughtful, and the minds of his friends were not idle.

In the middle of the second course when the generous wine of France had roused his better nature, he started from a reverie, and with a smile of pride and generousness exclaimed, "Sirs, the Earl of Pembroke is a noble man, and of great lineage: he is the son of my natural lord the King of England, for he hath married his daughter, and in every thing he is companion to the Earl of Cambridge. He hath required me to come to him, and I ought to consent to his desire."

Then thrusting the table from him, and rising to the full height of his fine martial figure, he cried, "Gallant knights, I will ride to Puirenon."

This noble and generous resolve found an echo in the heart of every one that was present. The trumpets sounded, the knights hastily donned their armour, and saddled the first horses they could meet with; and in a few moments the court-yard glittered with more than two hundred spears. They rode apace to wards Puirenon; bur news of their approach reached the vigilant French in sufficient time for them to abandon the siege, and effect their retreat with their prisoners and booty.

The Earl of Pembroke soon found that the terror of the name of Chandos had scared the foe, and he proposed to his companions to ride towards Poictiers and meet their deliverers. They according left the village in a right pleasant mode, some on foot, others on horses, and many a gallant steed carried double that day. They had not ridden a league before they met Sir John Chandos and his company, who much to their regret heard of the retreat of the French. The two parties rode in company for the space of three leagues, holding merry converse on deeds of arms. They then departed, Chandos returning to Poictiers, and the Earl of Pembroke to Mortaygne.*

Our knight's career of glory approached its close. By the treachery of a Monk, the abbey of St. Salvyn, seven leagues from Poictiers, fell into the possession of the French, who all that year, 1371, had been harassing the English territories. Chandos was deeply mortified at the loss of the abbey, it being within the scope of his seneschalship. To recover it by chivalric skill, or to bring his enemies to fair and manly battle, seemed equally impossible, and his high spirit was wounded at these insults to his military abilities. On the last day of December he made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the abbey; and when he returned to the town of Chauvigny,

* Froissart, cc. 265, 266.

Digitized by Google

he dismissed two-thirds of his troops, knights of Poictou and England. Sir Thomas Percy, with thirty spears, had his leave to go in quest of adventures. His own mind was too ill at rest for him to indulge in mere chivalric exercises; and after he had wished them good speed he went back into the house full of melancholy thoughts. He would not retire to rest though the night was far advanced; but he remained in the kitchen warming himself by the fire, his servants endeavouring by their jests and tales to banish his uneasiness.

Before daylight a man with the haste and anxiety of the bearer of news of import came into the house.

"The Frenchmen are riding abroad," said he to Sir John.

"How knowest thou that?"

"I left St. Salvyn with them," was the answer.

"Which way did they ride?" demanded Chandos.

"Their exact course I wot not," replied his informant; "but I saw them on the high road to Poictiers."

"What Frenchmen?" inquired Sir John.

"Sir Louis of St. Julian, and Carnot the Breton."

"Well," quoth Chandos, "I care not: I have no mind to ride forth tonight: it may happen that they may be encountered, though I am not there."

The conversation closed here, but Chandos could not dismiss the subject from his mind. He mused upon what he had heard, and hope gradually broke through the gloom of his disappointment.

He then told his knights he would ride to Poictiers, and they joyfully caparisoned their horses.

Chandos and forty spears left Chauvigny before daylight, and getting into the Frenchmen's course, they soon overtook them near the bridge of Lusac. They were on foot, preparing to attack Sir Thomas Percy and his little band, who had posted themselves on the other side of the bridge.

Before the Frenchmen and Bretons had arranged their plan of assault, they heard the trampling of Chandos's warhorses, and turning round they saw his dreadful banner displayed. He approached within three furlongs of the bridge and had a parley with them. He reproached them for their robberies and acts of violence in the country whereof he was seneschal.

"It is more than a year and a half," he continued, "that I have set all my aim to find and encounter you, and now, I thank God, I see you and speak to you. It shall soon be known who is prowest, you or I. You have often vaunted your desire to meet me; now you may see me before you.—I am John Chandos: regard me well," he thundered in their ears, his countenance darkening as he spoke.

At that moment an English squire was struck to the earth by the lance of a Breton. The generous nature of Chandos was roused at this ungallant act; and, in a tone of mingled expostulation and reproof, he cried to his own company, "Sirs, how is it that you suffer this squire thus to be slain? A foot, a foot!"

He dismounted, and so did all his band, and they advanced against the French. His banner, with the escutcheon above his arms, was carried before him, and some of his men-at-arms surrounded it. Chandos missed his steps, for the ground was slippery from the hoar-frost of the morning, and in his impatience for battle he entangled his feet in the folds of his surcoat. He fell just as he reached his enemy; and as he was rising the lance of a French squire entered his flesh, under the left eye, between the nose and the forehead. Chandos could not see to ward off the stroke; for, some years before, he had lost the sight of that eye, while hunting the hart in the country round Bourdeaux: unhappily, too, his helmet was without the defence of its vizor.

He fell upon the earth, and rolled over two or three times, from the pain of the wound, but he never spoke again.

The French endeavoured to seize him; but his uncle, Sir Edward Clifford, bestrode the body, and defended it so valorously, that soon none dared to approach him.

The barons and knights of Poictou were conquerors, and when the confusion was hushed, they flocked round their outstretched friend and seneschal.

Digitized by Google

They wept, they wrung their hands, they tore their hair, and gave way to every violent expression of grief. They called him the flower of chivalry, and lamented the hour when the lance was forged which had brought him into peril of death.

He heard and understood them well, but was unable to reply. His servants then unarmed him; and, laying him upon a pavesse or large shield, they bore him gently to the neighbouring fortress of Mortimer.

He died on the following day; and a cavalier more courteous, and more worthily adorned with noble virtues and high qualitites, never adorned the English chivalry. He was, in sooth, as gallant a knight as ever laid lance in rest.

The Prince of Wales, the Earl of Cambridge, the Earl of Pembroke, and, indeed, all the English barons and knights then in Guienne, lamented his fate, as the loss of all the English dominions in France; and many right noble and valiant knights of France mourned the death of a generous foe, and they wished he had been made prisoner; for they said he was so sage and imaginative that he would have planned a peace between the two nations.*

Chandos was never married. All the estates which he had won by his valour went to his three sisters.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE REIGN OF RICHARD II. TO THAT OF HENRY VIII.

Complaints of the unchivalric State of Richard's Court.—Influence of Chivalry on the national Character. — Scottish Chivalry. — Chivalric kindness of Robert Bruce.—Mutual Chivalry, between the Scotch and English Courts.—French Knight's Opinions of Scottish Chivalry.—Courtesies between English and Scottish Knights. — Chivalric Battle of Otterbourn.—Hotspur and the Douglas.—A cavaleresque Story.—Reign of Henry IV.—Chivalric Parley between him and the Duke of Orleans.— Henry's unchivalric Conduct at Shrewsbury.—Henry V.—Knights of the Bath.—Henry's love of chivalric Books.—His chivalric bearing.—Commencement of the Decline of Chivalry.—The Civil Wars injured Chivalry.—Caxton's Lamentation.—He exaggerates the Evil.—Many gallant English Knights.—Character of Henry VIII. with Reference to Chivalry.—Tournaments in his Reign.—Field of the Cloth of Gold.—Introduction of Italian Literature favoured Romance.—Popularity of Chivalric Literature.—English Knights continued to break Lances for Ladies' Love.—State of Scottish Chivalry at this Period.—James IV.—Chivalric circumstances at Flodden Field.

In the reign of Richard II., the splendour of England's chivalry was clouded. That monarch had neither spirit nor ambition to recover the possessions which had been wrested from the crown during the illness of his father, the Black Prince, and the imbecility of his grandfather Edward III.; for though the war with France nominally continued, yet he gave few occasions for his knights to break their lances with the French. Not that England enjoyed a state of perfect peace, but the wars in France and Portugal had no brilliant results, for the English knights were no longer guided by the sageness of Chandos, or the gallantry of Prince Edward.

England was menaced with invasion by Charles VI. of France; but the project died away, and nothing gave greater offence to the people than the want of spirit in the court, in not revenging itself for the insult. A comparison was immediately instituted between the present and the preceding reign. Where were those great enterprises, it was asked, which distinguished the days of Edward III.? where could be found the valiant men who had fought with the prince his son? In those days England was feared, and was reputed as possessing the flower of Christian chivalry; but now no man speaks of her, now there are no wars but such as are made on poor men's purses, and thereto every one is inclined.*

The expensive wars of England with France were productive of mighty consequences to the English constitution. An application for redress of grievances always met the demand of supplies, and public liberty benefited by the costly ambition of the crown. The wars did not

* Froissart, c. 270.

* Froissart, liv. ii., c. 82.

Digitized by Google

spring from chivalry, and we cannot, therefore ascribe to that bright source any general political advantages which resulted from them; but chivalry gave the tone to the manner in which they were waged; hers were all the humanities of the contest; hers was, at least, half the distinction (for we must remember the bow was as formidable as the lance) of establishing the glory of the country; of giving her that proud character for martial prowess, which has outlived her brief and feeble tenure of the territorial consequences of victory.

Richard II. did not emulate the martial fame of his father. His neglect of the warriors of the former reign was not among the slightest causes of that disaffection which ultimately ruined him. One of the public grievances, as stated to the throne by the House of Commons, was that the chivalry of the country had been discountenanced and disgraced, and that the growth of vice had consequently increased.*

Richard was a voluptuous prince; the splendour of chivalry hung over his court; his tilts and tournaments were unusually magnificent; but the martial and, therefore, the chief spring of knighthood was wanting. A warlike sovereign could have found rich materials among his people for ambitious enterprises. The increasing wealth of the nation, arising from its improving commerce, displayed itself in luxuries; and the aspiring commonality imitated the chivalric courtesies of the great. It marks the state of the manners, that the splendid tapestries of the cities represented the martial achievements of Edward III.†

The name of the Douglas and the Percy were so highly distinguished in the fourteenth century, that the reign of Richard II. is a fit place for some notices of northern chivalry. The battle of Bannockburn proved that, in gallantry and generosity, the essentials of knighthood, the Scots were as noble as the cavaliers of the south; and there was a fine wildness of imagination among the people which was suitable to the romantic genius of chivalry.* But those of Scotland's heroes whose lives are known to us were patriots rather than cavaliers, the circumstances of the times in which they lived inflaming them with different passions than those which knighthood could inspire.

Sometimes, however, the stern virtues of patriotism were graced and softened by chivalric courtesy. Perhaps the most pleasing instance of this occurred in the conduct of Robert Bruce, in the year 1317, when he was assisting his brother, Edward Bruce, to subjugate Ireland; and I will not injure the story by telling it in any other way than in the simple and beautiful strain of the poet:

"The king has heard a woman cry,
He asked what that was in hy?[a]
It is the layndar,[b] Sir, said ane,
That her child-ill[c] right now has ta'en.
And must leave now behind us here,
Therefore she makes an evil cheer.[d]
The king said, "Certes, it were pity
That she in that point left should be,
For certes, I trow there is no man
That he no will rue[e] a woman than."
His hosts all then arrested he,
And gert a tent soon stintit[f] be,
And gert her gang in hastily,
And other women to be her by.
While she was delivered he bade,
And syne forth on his ways rade;

* 4 Plac. Parl. iii. 5.

† Thomas of Elmham, p. 72. His general expression, tapestries representing the ancient victories of England, I presume chiefly meant those of Edward II.

* The tales of chivalry had for their prologue some lines expressive of war and love; but in a grander strain the poetical biographer of the Bruce sings:—

"Ah! freedome is a noble thing;
Freedome makes men to have liking;
Freedome all solace to men gives;
He lives at ease, that freely lives.
A noble heart may have none ease,
Nor ellyss nought that may him please,
If freedome fail: for free liking
Is *yearned*[h] o'er all other thing.
Na he that aye has lived free
May not know well the property,
The anger, *na* the wretched doom
That is coupled to foul thraldom.
But if he had essayed it,
Then all *perqueri*[i] he should it wit,
And should think freedom more to prize
Than all the gold in world that is.
Thus contrary things ever more
Discoverings of the tother are."

The Bruce, line 225, &c.

a Haste. b Laundress. c Childbed.
d Stop. e Pity. f Pitched.
g Nor else. h Eagerly desired. i Perfectly.

Digitized by Google

And how she forth should carried be,
Or he forth fure[a] ordained he.
This was a full great courtesy,
That swilk a king and so mighty,
Gert his men dwell on this manner,
But for a poor lavender.[b]
The Bruce, Book, xi., 1, 270.

At the court of the Scottish kings, knighthood was always regarded as a distinction worthy of the highest ambition. Its objects were the same as in other countries—the defence of the church, protection of the helpless, and generosity to woman. The form of the chivalric oath has been preserved, and it presents us with a curious picture of ancient manners:

1. I shall fortify and defend the Christian religion to the uttermost of my power.

2. I shall be loyal and true to my sovereign lord the king; to all orders of chivalry, and to the noble office of arms.

3. I shall fortify and defend justice at my power; and that without favour or enmity.

4. I shall never flee from my sovereign lord the king; nor from his lieutenants, in time of affray or battle.

5. I shall defend my native land from all aliens and strangers.

6. I shall defend the just action and quarrel of all ladies of honour, of all true and friendless widows, of orphans, and of maidens of good fame.

7. I shall do diligence wheresoever I hear that there are any murderers, traitors, or masterful robbers, who oppress the king's lieges and poor people, to bring them to the law at my power.

8. I shall maintain and uphold the noble state of chivalry, with horse, armour, and other knightly habiliments, and shall help and succour those of the same order, at my power, if they have need.

9. I shall inquire and seek to have the knowledge and understanding of all the articles and points contained in the book of chivalry. All these promises to observe, keep, and fulfil, I oblige myself: so help me God by my own hand, and by God himself.*

Chivalric honours formed sometimes a bond of connexion between the Scottish and the English sovereigns. When Prince Henry (afterwards King Henry II.) arrived at the age of sixteen years, his father Geoffry sent him through England with a numerous and splendid retinue into Scotland, to receive the honour of knighthood from his mother's uncle, King David. The ceremony was performed with great pomp, in the midst of a prodigious concourse of the English, Scottish, and Norman nobility; and the Prince spent about eight months in the court of Scotland, perfecting himself in military exercises.*

A few years afterwards chivalric honours were conferred by Henry II. of England upon Malcolm II. But the granting of knighthood was not regarded as a matter of mere courtesy. When the kings met at Carlisle, in 1158, the previous cession of the northern provinces by Malcolm to Henry gave rise to such heats and feuds, that the Scottish Monarch departed without receiving the honour he desired. In the next year, however, Henry, by excellent address, persuaded Malcolm to accompany him to France for the recovery of Thoulouse, which he claimed as part of the inheritance of Eleanor his queen; and the honour which Henry had refused in the last year to give him at Carlisle, he now conferred upon him at Tours in France, in the course of his return from the Thoulouse expedition.†

In 1249, when King Alexander III. repaired from Scotland to York to be married to the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry III. of England, the ceremonies of chivalry preceded those of marriage. Alexander received the ensigns of knighthood from the King of England on Christmas day, and the hand of his bride on the following morning.‡ Tournaments were occasionally held at the Scottish court, and strangers were courteously received.§ Knights from Scotland are frequently mentioned in the

* Selden's Titles of Honour, and Pinkerton's History of Scotland, on the authority of a book which I have not been able to meet with, called "Certain Matters composed together." Edinb. 1597, 4to.

[a] Moved. [b] Laundress.

* Henry's History of England, vol. iii., p. 80, 4to.

† Border History of England and Scotland, p. 91.

‡ Ibid., p. 143.

§ Nisbet's Heraldy, i., 7.

Digitized by Google

old chronicles as having won the prize in the chivalric festivals in France and England. In the wars of the Scots with Edward III. no circumstances of a character peculiarly knightly can be selected; and in the intervals of true chivalry could not, as in the wars between England and France, give the guise of friendship to occasional intercourse. In the year 1341, a time of peace, Edward passed some time in Scotland. Tournaments and jousts formed the occupation of the strangers and the natives; but neither party regarded the gentle rules of the tourney, and two Scottish knights and one English knight were killed.*

Nothing could contribute more powerfully to the advancement of chivalry in the north than the frequent intercourse between the Scots and the French. The latter people, however, would not always acknowledge the chivalric character of their allies. In the year 1385, a troop of French knights joined the Scottish king; and they soon were grieved that they had ever left their own country. They complained to their leader, Sir John of Vienne, of their unhappy lot. They had no tapestried halls and goodly castles as in France; and instead of soft beds their couches were as hard as the ground.

Sir John was a true son of chivalry; and he said to them, "Sirs, it behoves us to suffer a little, and to speak fair since we are in the perils of war. Let us take in cheerfulness that which we find. We cannot always be at Paris, Dijon, Beaune, or at Chalons. It behoveth them that live in the world thinking to have honour, to suffer poverty as well as to enjoy wealth."

The reader of English history remembers that Richard II. invaded Scotland; that at the same time the Scots ravaged Cumberland and Westmoreland; and that each army boasted that the destruction it had committed was fully as dreadful as the havoc made by the other. It is more curious to notice the trait of manners which general historians have altogether omitted, that when the French knights returned home, they complained that they had never passed through so painful an enterprise. Not that they regarded the perilous mêlée, but it was because they returned without horse or harness, poor and feeble. They wished that the French king would unite with the English king, and go into Scotland and destroy that realm for ever. The Scots were an evil people, traitors, and altogether foolish in feats of war.*

English knights always more rejoiced when the trumpet summoned them to France than to Scotland. The rich wines, the fine country, the superior chivalry of the French were preferred before the poverty and bleakness of the north. When the English knights went to Scotland they were obliged to carry provisions with them; and also horses' shoes and harness, the country not furnishing iron or leather.†

The wars between England and Scotland, though fierce and sanguinary, admitted the display of the liberal feelings of chivalry. "Englishmen on the one party, and Scots on the other," says Froissart, "are good men of war: for when they meet there is a hard fight without sparing. There is no pause between them as long as spears, swords, axes, or daggers will endure. When one party hath obtained the victory, they then glorify so in their deeds of arms and are so joyful, that such as are taken are ransomed ere they go out of the field; so that shortly each of them is content with the other, that at their departing they will say courteously, God thank you."‡

These remarks of Froissart, so interesting because so characteristic of manners, prelude the most chivalric battle that ever

* Knyghton, col. 2580.

* This amusing opinion of the French knights should be given in the original language. "Adonc eurent plusieurs chevaliers et escuyers de France passage: et retournerent en Flandres, ou là ou ils pouvoyent arriver, tous affamés, sans monture, et sans armeures: et Escoce maudissoyent, et le heure qu'ils y avoyent entré: et disoyent qu'oncques si duc voyage ne fut: et qu'ils voudroyent que le roi de France s'accordast aux Anglois, un an ou deux, et puis allast en Escoce, pour tout destruire, car oncques si mauvaises gens ne verint: n'y ne trouverent si faux et se traistres, ne de si petite congnuissance. Vol. ii., c. 174.

† The Scotch knights procured horse-shoes and harness ready made from Flanders. Froissart, vol. ii., c. 3. Lord Berners's translation.

‡ Froissart, vol. ii., c. 142.

Digitized by Google

was fought between Scotland and England. Other battles were decided either by the bow or by that general military skill which was not peculiar to chivalry; but the battle of Otterbourn was a knightly mêlée, and was as truly chivalric as an encounter of cavaliers in the tournament. In the reign of Richard II. of England, and a few years after the circumstances in his time already alluded to, the Scots commanded by James Earl Douglas, taking advantage of the troubles between the King and his parliament, poured upon the south. When they were sated with plunder and destruction, they rested at New-castle, near the English force which the Earl of Northumberland and other border-chieftains had hastily levied.

The Earl's two sons were young and lusty knights, and ever foremost at the barriers to skirmish. Many proper feats of arms were done and achieved. The fighting was hand to hand. The noblest encounter was that which occurred between the Earl Douglas and Sir Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur.* The Scot won the pennon of his foeman; and in the triumph of his victory he exclaimed that he would carry it to Scotland, and set it on high on his castle of Dalkeith, that it might be seen afar off.

Percy indignantly replied, that Douglas should not pass the border without being met in a manner which would give him no cause for boasting.

With equal spirit the Earl Douglas invited him that night to his lodging to seek for his pennon.

The Scots then retired, and kept careful watch, lest the taunts of their leader should urge the Englishmen to make an attack. Percy's spirit burned to efface his reproach, but he was counselled into calmness.

The Scots then dislodged, seemingly resolved to return with all haste to their own country. But Otterbourn arrested their steps. The castle resisted the assault; and the capture of it would have been of such little value to them that most of the Scotch knights wished that the enterprise should be abandoned.

Douglas commanded, however, that the assault should be persevered in, and he was entirely influenced by his chivalric feelings. He contended that the very difficulty of the enterprise was the reason of undertaking it; and he wished not to be too far from Sir Henry Percy, lest that gallant knight should not be able to do his devoir in redeeming his pledge of winning the pennon of his arms again.

Hotspur was not altogether that impatient spirit which poetry has described him. He longed, indeed, to follow the Douglas, and redeem his badge of honour; but the sage knights of the country, and such as were well expert in arms, spoke against his opinion, and said to him, "Sir, there fortuneth in war oftentimes many losses. If the Earl of Douglas has won your pennon, he bought it dear, for he came to the gate to seek it, and was well beaten: another day you shall win as much of him and more. Sir, we say this because we know well that all the power of Scotland is abroad in the fields; and if we issue forth and are not strong enough to fight with them, (and perchance they have made this skirmish with us to draw us out of the town,) they may soon enclose us, and do with us what they will. It is better to lose a pennon than two or three hundred knights and squires, and put all the country to adventure."

By such words as these Hotspur and his brother were refrained from their purpose; for like sage and imaginative knights they would do nothing against counsel.

Soon afterwards it was discovered that the whole amount of the Scottish force did not exceed three thousand men. Hotspur's heart leapt for joy at the prospect of glory which this news opened to him; and like a true son of chivalry he cried to his friends, "Sirs, let us spring upon our horses, for by the faith I owe unto God, and to my lord my father, I will go and seek my pennon, and dislodge the Scots this same night."

Incontinently knights and squires donned their helms and cuirasses, and vaulted on their war-steeds. They rode more than apace to Otterbourn, and

* "Henry Percy," says Holingshed, "was surnamed, for his often pricking, Henry Hotspur, as one that seldom times rested, if there were any service to be done abroad." History of Scotland, p. 240.

Digitized by Google

reached the Scottish camp by night. They far out-numbered their foeman, but the numerical was not the physical strength, for the English were fore-spent with travel, while the Scots were fresh and well rested.

The hostile banners waved in the night-breeze, and the bright moon, which had been more wont to look upon the loves than the wars of chivalry, lighted up the Scottish camp. A battle ensued of as valiant a character as any recorded in the pages of history; for there was neither knight nor squire but that did his devoir and fought hand to hand. The English dashed upon their foeman with such spirit, that their charge would have been irresistible, if Douglas, who was of great heart and high of enterprise, had not taken his axe in both his hands, and supported his retreating band. At length he was encountered by three spears at once, and borne perforce to the earth. One of his companions, a gallant knight, and a chaplain who fought on that occasion like a valiant man of arms with a good axe in his hands, skirmished about the Earl as he lay, and kept the press from him.*

When it was known that Douglas had fallen, some of his knights ran with breathless anxiety to the spot and asked him how he sped. "Right evil, cousins," quoth the Earl; "but thank God, very few of my ancestors have died in their beds. But I require you to avenge my death, for I feel my heart fainting within me. Raise my banner, but do not declare my case to any one; for my enemies would rejoice and my friends be discomforted, to hear that I have been wounded to death."

In a moment the proud ensign of his chivalry waved once again over the Scottish knights, and each gallent man-at-arms, cheered his companion's heart by crying the war-cry of the Douglas. The Percys were made prisoners, Hotspur† by the Earl of Montgomery, and Sir Ralph by Sir John Maxwell. Finally, the Scottish chivalry prevailed, and they remained masters of the field.*

Nothing could be more gallant than the demeanour of the Scots. They wished to take alive Thomas Felton, an English squire, whose valour excited their admiration; but, like a true hero, he submitted to be slain rather than to be vanquished.

The Scots, when the Englishmen yielded, were courteous, and set them to their ransom; and every man said to his prisoner, "Sir, go and unarm you, and take your ease;" and they lived together as if they had been brethren.

Among the circumstances connected with the battle, none is more interesting than this:— When the fate of the night was decided, Sir Mathew Redman, an Englishman, and governor of Berwick, spurred his horse from the field, but was hotly pursued by the Scottish knight, Sir James Lindsay, and he could not escape, for his panting charger fell under him. Lindsay dismounted, and the two knights fought well and chivalrously, Scotsman with his axe (the favourite weapon of the nation), and the English knight with his sword. The axe prevailed, and Redman surrendered himself, rescue or no rescue. He wished to go to Newcastle, and his master, (for such, as we have often seen, was the title of a knight who held another captive,) permitted him to depart, on his pledging his word of chivalry, that within three weeks he would meet him at Edinburgh. The knights then separated; but as Lindsay was returning to the Scottish host, priding himself on his success, he was surrounded by the bishop of Durham and a numerous troop. Some hours before, they had marched purposely to the succour of Percy; but the clangour of the mêlée had terrified them into a retreat. They possessed suffi-

* The gallantry of this fighting priest was afterwards rewarded by the gift of the archdeacontry of Aberdeen.

† He was afterwards ransomed; and, according to Camden, Pounouny castle, in Scotland, was built out of the ransom money.

* Walsingham (p. 366.) says that the Earl of Dunbar came in and turned the scale in favour of the Scots. Nothing of this is mentioned by Froissart, who had his account of the battle from the Douglas family, at whose castle he resided some time. If it be said that their account was probably a prejudiced one, the same objection may be raised against that of Walsingham. The Douglas's always spoke of their victory with true chivalric modesty; for they declared that it was the consequence of the exhausted state of the English after the march from Newcastle.

Digitized by Google

cient bravery, however, to take a single and battle-worn knight. He was led to Newcastle, where he met Sir Matthew Redman: and these two gallant cavaliers dined right merrily together, and, after quaffing many a cup of rich wine, to the honour and health of their mistresses, they arranged with the Bishop the conditions of each other's liberation.*

The reign of Henry IV. of England was not altogether void of chivalric interest. While Duke of Lancaster he had chosen Louis Duke of Orleans for his brother in chivalry. Each had promised to the other that they would live in the warmest affection of true friendship. Each vowed to be a friend and well-wisher to the friends and well-wishers of the other, and an enemy to his enemies, as became the honour and reputation of both; and at all times, and in all places, they would by words and deeds assist each other in the defence of his person, honour, and estate. These chivalric engagements between the two Dukes had been made known to the world in an instrument called a letter of alliance, dated the 17th of June, 1396.

The friendship lasted during the remainder of the reign of Richard II.; but the deposition of that monarch was so odious a circumstance, in the eyes of the court of France, the daughter of whose sovereign Richard had married, that although no open rupture of the existing truce between the two nations took place, yet many high-spirited French noblemen made private war upon the English king.

The Duke of Orleans, his sworn brother in arms, challenged Henry IV. to meet him at any place he chose in France, each of them being accompanied by one hundred knights and squires, of name and arms without reproach, and to combat together till one of the parties should surrender.

Henry declined the challenge, alleging, as his reasons, the public truce between the two countries, to which the Duke of Orleans was a party, and the particular treaty of alliance between themselves. That treaty, however, he now annulled, and threw aside thenceforth all love and affection towards the Duke. He declared that it would be unworthy of his high rank to accept the challenge of any one of inferior dignity to himself, nor had any of his royal progenitors ever employed his arms with one hundred or more persons, in such a cause: but whenever he should think it convenient to visit his possessions on the French side of the sea, accompanied by such numbers of persons as he thought proper, the Duke of Orleans might assemble as many persons as he should judge expedient, to acquire honour in the accomplishing of all his courageous desires; and he should not depart without being satisfied in a combat between themselves; which mode of terminating their dispute was preferable to any other that might occasion the effusion of more Christian blood.

The Duke of Orleans replied that the public truce had been violated by Henry himself, when he made war upon Richard the ally of France. With respect to the articles of friendship between themselves, the allies of the King of France had been excepted from their provisions, and therefore either party was left to his choice of conduct regarding the deportment of the other to any of their allies. On the subject of a remark of Henry that no knight, of whatever rank he might be, ought to request a deed of arms, until he should have returned any article of alliance that might exist between himself and the challenged person, Louis satirically inquired whether Henry had rendered to his lord King Richard, the oath of fidelity he had made to him, before he had proceeded in the manner he had done against his person. The Duke insinuated that Richard's death had been compassed by Henry, and then inquired how the King could suffer that noble lady, the Queen of England, to return to France so desolate after the death of her husband, despoiled of her portion and dower. The man who sought to gain honour was always the defender and guardian of the rights of widows and damsels of virtuous life, such as the niece of the Duke of Orleans was known to lead; and as he was so nearly related to her, acquitting himself towards God and towards her as a relation, he re-

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 146. Buchanan, lib. 9, p. 173.

Digitized by Google

plied, that to avoid effusion of blood he would cheerfully meet him in single combat.

In reply to this letter Henry observed, that when public affairs had called him from France to England, Louis had promised him aid, and that therefore the Duke could not in justice comment on the late revolution: but with that respect to Richard personally, he, Henry, now king, denied most warmly and solemnly that his death had been occasioned by his order or consent. He declared it to be false, and said it would be false each time that Louis uttered it; and this he was ready to prove, through the grace of God, in personal combat. He repelled the charge of cruelty to Isabella; contending that, on the contrary, he had ever shown kindness and friendship to her, and wishing that Louis had never acted with greater rigour, unkindness, or cruelty towards any lady or damsel than he had done her.

But the proposed combat never took place; nor can it be inferred that either party was very sincere in his challenge, for the ambassadors of Henry at the court of France often complained of the conduct of Louis; but Louis never reiterated his challenge, and no satisfaction was rendered, the King and council waiving the matter entirely, and coldly stating that they would always continue firm to the engagements which they had made with England.*

In another event, the most important event of his reign, the conduct of Henry was most decidedly unchivalric. When at the battle of Shrewsbury, (July 21, 1403,) the banners advanced, and the air was rent with the war-cries, "Saint George!" and "Esperance Percy!" the archers on either side drew their tough bow-strings with such murderous energy, that the several lines of knights and men-at-arms with difficulty maintained their ground.

In this moment of peril, when the stoutest hearts quailed, the gallant Hotspur, and Archibald Earl Douglas,† with a small band of brothers in arms, started from their host, and throwing their warlike shields before them, rushed, amidst an iron shower, into the very centre, the best defended part, of the royal army. Their battle-axes and good swords made fearful havoc among the King's guards, the standard of England was trodden under foot, and the Earl of Stafford and that "dear and true industrious friend" of the King, Sir Robert Blunt, who were armed in royal guise, were slain.* Hotspur sought in vain for the King; for when His Grace observed the Percies sweeping across the field, he had followed the prudent council of the Earl of Dunbar, and changing his armour for that of a common knight, he repaired to another part of the plain.

The Prince of Wales displayed more bravery than his father, and he was wounded while maintaining his position.

Hotspur now formed his little band into a dense array, and endeavoured to retire to his line of knights. But while he was fighting with all the courage of his high chivalry, a random arrow brought him to the earth. His death was almost instantaneous; and the event was viewed through either army with the various feelings of joy and wo. He had been the inspiring soul of his own host, and his fall was the signal for their dispersion.

The character of courage can scarcely be denied to Henry IV., but it was not graced by any of the lofty daring of chivalry. An Edward would have braved the fiercest danger, he would never have thrown aside the insignia of his rank, and clothing some noble friends in the royal habiliments, have left them to perish in his stead. The

* Monstrelet, vol. i., c. 9, &c. Rymer, Fœdera, vol. viii, p. 310, 311.

† This Archibald Douglas Earl of Galloway, called the Grim, was an illegitimate son of a good Sir James Douglas, and the successor in the earldom of Douglas to the Earl James who fell at Otterbourn. Archibald had been taken prisoner by Hotspur at the battle of Holmedon Hill; and Percy agreed, that if he would fight with him as valiantly against Henry IV. as he had fought during that battle, he would give him his liberty free of ransom-money. Douglas, as a soldier and an enemy of the English king, had no objection to these terms, and therefore he fought at the battle of Shrewsbury. Buchanan, book 10.

* Well, indeed, might the Scottish knight say,

"Another king! they grow like Hydra-heads:
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those
That wear these colours on them."

Shakspeare, Henry IV., Part I., act. v., scene 4.

Digitized by Google

conduct of Henry might have been royal, but it certainly was not chivalric.*

The glories of chivalry seemed to be revived in the reign of Harry Monmouth. His coronation was accompanied by a large creation of a class of knights, whose peculiar nature I have not yet expressed. In the early ages of English history there seems to have been two descriptions of cavaliers, the Knights of the Sword, and the Knights of the Bath. The former were made both in times of war and peace, the latter only at coronations, royal marriages, and other festive occasions. The dubbing with the sword was the simple ceremony of creating knights of the one class; but most of the forms of chivalry were used in the investiture of those of the other: and as the Bath was a very remarkable part of the ceremony, and the exhortation to the performance of chivalric duties was delivered to the knight while he was in it, the knights so created were reputed knights of the Bath.

The Knights of the Sword, or Knights Bachelors, were created by the sheriffs of counties, by virtue of letters from the King, commanding his officers to knight those persons who, in consequence of their landed estates, were worthy of the honour; but when the other class was to be enlarged, the king selected a certain number of the young nobility and gentry, and he himself assisted at the ceremony.

Knights of the Bath always took precedence of Knights Bachelors; and as the superiority of the Knights of the Garter was shown by the circumstance, that on the installation of a knight there was a creation of knights of the Bath, so on another occasion, when knights of the Bath were made, there was, in honour of the circumstance, a creation of knights of the Sword.

The exact time when this distinction was first made between Knights of the Bath and Knights of the Sword, has eluded the investigation of antiquaries, nor does it deserve a lengthened inquiry. It may be marked in the reign of Henry IV.,* and was probably of earlier origin; and at the coronation of his son this feature of our ancient manners were fully displayed.

The King, with a noble and numerous train of lords spiritual and temporal, left his palace at Kingston-upon-Thames, and rode at a soft pace towards London. He was met and greeted by a countless throng of earls, barons, knights, squires, and other men of landed estate and consideration; and as he approached the city, a solemn procession of its clergy, and a gorgeous train of its merchants and tradesmen, hailed his approach. The King was conducted with every

* Otterbourne, p. 239, 244. Walsingham, p. 410, &c. Hall, folio 22. I mean not to say, however, that his conduct was without precedent, for at the great battle of Poictiers nineteen French knights were arrayed like King John.

* Camden has marked the commencement of this custom in the reign of Henry IV., and he has been followed by all our writers on heraldry and titles of honour, except Anstis, who endeavours to trace it to the reign of Edward I. Anstis mistook the matter entirely. Undoubtedly many instances may be met with in earlier times when knights were created with the full ceremonies of oblation of the sword at the altar, of bathing, &c.; and in strictness all knights should have been created in that manner. Whenever Anstis met with a knight inaugurated in that way, he called him a knight of the Bath. Now the question is, at what time was the first royal marriage, royal christening, or other festivity, when knights were made? — made, not exactly for military objects, not in consequence of feudal tenure, but in honour of the event which they were celebrating. Knights of the Bath were knights of peace, knights of compliment and courtesy. Camden's opinion was founded on the following passage in Froissart: "The vigil before the coronation (of Henry IV.) was on the evening of Saturday, on that occasion, and at that time, there watched all the esquires who were the next morning to be created knights, to the number of forty-six. Each of them had his esquire attending him, a separate chamber, and a separate bath, where the rites of bathing were that night performed. On the day following, the Duke of Lancaster (Henry IV.) at the time of celebrating mass, created them knights, giving them long green coats, the sleeves whereof were cut straight, and furred with minever, and with great hoods or chaperons furred in the same manner, and after the fashion used by prelates. And every one of these knights, on his left shoulder, had a double cordon or string of white silk, to which white tassels were pendent. Now there is nothing in this passage which can lead the mind to think that the coronation of Henry IV. was the first occasion when knights of the Bath were created; and, therefore, our writers on heraldry and titles of honour are not justified in the positiveness with which they always head the dissertations on knighthood of the Bath with the year 1399.

Digitized by Google

mark of honour to the Tower, where about fifty gallant young gentlemen of noble birth were waiting in expectation of receiving the honour of knighthood from the King, on occasion of the august ceremony of his coronation. The sovereign feasted his lords in the Tower; and these young candidates for chivalry, in testimony that they should not be compellable at any future time to perform the like service in the habit of esquires, served up the dishes at this royal festival according to the usage of chivalry in England; and immediately after the entertainment they retired to an apartment where dukes, earls, barons, and honourable knights, as their counsellors or directors, instructed them upon their behaviour, when they should become Knights of the venerable order of the Bath.

The young candidates, according to custom, went into the baths prepared severally for them, performing their vigils and the other rites and exercises of chivalric practice. Much of the night was passed in watching and prayer, the rest they slept away in rich golden beds. They arose on the first appearance of the next morning's dawn; and, after giving their beds to the domestic servants of the King's household, as their customary fee, they proceeded to hear mass. Their devotions concluded, they clad themselves in rich silk mantles, to whose left shoulders were attached a double cordon, or strings of white silk, from which white tassels were pendent. This addition to the mantle was not regarded as a decoration, but a badge of gentle shame, which the knight was obliged to wear until some high emprise had been achieved by him. The proud calls of his knighthood were remissible, however, by his lady-love; for a fair and noble damsel could remove this stigma from his shoulder, at her own sweet will; for there were no limits to woman's power in the glorious days of chivalry.*

The young soldiers mounted noble war-steeds, and rode to the gate of the royal palace, where, dismounting, each of them was supported by two knights, and conducted with all proper marks of honour and respect into the presence of the King, who, sitting in royal magnificence, the throne being surrounded with the great officers of state, promoted them severally to the honour of knighthood. A great festival was then given in their honour, and they were permitted to sit down in their rich silk mantles in the King's presence; but they were not allowed to taste any part of the entertainment; for it was a feature in the simple manners of our ancestors, that new made knights, like new made wives, ought to be scrupulously modest and abstemious.*

After the royal feast was done, the young cavaliers divested themselves of their mantles, put on rich robes ornamented with ensigns of dependence on the King. The next day, when the King rode to Westminster in much state and solemn order, all these young knights whom he had just honoured with the order of chivalry, preceded him, riding with noble chevisance through the middle of the city; and so splendid was their appearance that the spectators (observes the old chronicler) seemed inebriated with joy.†

It is a pleasing and convincing proof of the chivalric spirit of Harry Monmouth, that he commanded Lydgate to translate into English the Destruction of Troy, in order that the public mind might be restored to its ancient military tone. He wished that the remembrance of the valiant dead should live, that the worthiness and prowess of the old chivalry and true knighthood should be remembered again.‡ Accordingly, the

* That the shoulder-knot of the knights of the Bath was worn only for a time, and on the principle of chivalry which induced men to place chains round their legs until they had performed some deeds of arms, I learn from Upton, a writer of great reputation in heraldic matters, who lived in the days of Henry VI. See his treatise De Re Militari, p. 10, quoted in the Appendix to Anstis's History of the Knighthood of the Bath.

* Thus, Chaucer:

"A custom is unto these nobles all,
A bride shall not eaten in the hall,
Till days four, other three at the least
Y passed, then let her go to feast."

† MS. Norfolc. in Off. Arm. n. 15. See Anstis's Appendix to his History of Knighthood of the Bath, p. 24.

‡ "For to obeie without variaunce
My lordes byddying fully and plesaunce
Whiche hath desire, sothly for to seyn
Of verray knyghthood, to remember agayn

youth of England were on fire, and honour's thought reigned solely in the breast of every man.

"They sell the pasture now to buy the horse;
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,
With winged heels, as English Mercuries.
For now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword, from heels unto the point.
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,
Promis'd to Harry and his followers."*

Certainly the march to Calais (after the taking of Harfleur) was never exceeded in heroic bravery by any imaginary exploit in romance. The attenuated condition of his army forbad all immediate prosecution of his ambitious aspirations for the French crown; but a direct return to England did not accord with his high and courageous spirit; and, treating the soil of France as if it were his own, he resolved to march to Calais. He professed neither desire nor fear to meet his enemies; and he pursued his march with firm and grave steps, openly declaring to the French heralds the destinations of his course. Political objects were suspended, but he secretly wished to raise the chivalric character of his people; and he had numbers and vigour yet remaining to have a joust to the utterance with his enemies. As at Poictiers so at Agincourt, the yeomen divided with the knights of England the glory of the conquest: but the battle of Agincourt was in itself more heroic, for the English themselves were the assailants, instead of, as in the former battle, waiting the attack.

Henry's disdain of the wish of having more men from England, — his noble cry, "Banners, advance!" when his few thousands were ranged against all the proud chivalry of France, — his rendering himself conspicuous by his crown, his armour, and his splendid tunic, — his knighting some brave Welsh soldiers, his personal defenders, even as they lay expiring; — these circumstances, vouched for, as they are, by the most faithful chroniclers, apparently belong to the romance rather than to the history of chivalry.

After the battle, he was as courteous* to his noble prisoners as the Black Prince had been on a similar occasion; and there was something very beautiful in his not permitting his battered helmet, with its royal crown, to be exhibited during the customary show at his public entrance into London.†

Henry V. was the last of our chivalric kings. Though he revived the fame of Edward III. and the Black Prince, yet immediately after his reign the glories of English chivalry began to wane.

In our subsequent wars in France, indeed, there were among our nobility many knightly spirits, — the Warwicks, the Talbots, the Suffolks, the Salisburys, all worthy to have been the paladins of Charlemagne, the knights of Arthur's Round Table. But they went not with the character of the age; they opposed, rather than reflected it. Chivalry was no longer a national feature in our wars when there was no sovereign to fan the flame.

Henry VI. was a devotee, and Edward IV. a voluptuary. The civil wars in England operated as fatally upon the noble order of knighthood as the civil wars in France had done in that country. In those contests, far fiercer than the national hostilities, there was a ruthlessness

The worthyness, gif I shall not lye,
And the prowesse of olde chivalrie."
Lydgate, War of Troy.

* Henry V., Act ii., Chorus.

* He was kind and courteous to them immediately after the battle, and indeed as long as their deportment merited his friendship. The duke of Orleans and four other princes of the blood royal were taken prisoners at the battle of Agincourt, and for a while lived on their parole. But when they forfeited the titles of knights and gentlemen, by endeavouring to deceive and betray Henry while he was negotiating with the parties that distracted France, he then removed them to close confinement in Pontefrac castle; nor did they obtain their liberty for many years. A great outcry has been raised against Henry for his conduct in this instance, — for his not showing a chivalric deportment to men who had forfeited their honour.

† Thus the Chorus in Shakspeare's Henry V. addresses the audience:

"So let him land,
And solemnly, see him set on to London.
So swift a pace has thought, that even now
You may imagine him upon Blackheath.
When that his lords desire him, to have borne
His bruised helmet and his bended sword,
Before him through the city: he forbids it,
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride:
Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,
Quite from himself, to God."

Digitized by Google

of spirit that mocked the gentle influences of chivalry. Accordingly it was asked in the time of Edward IV., "How many knights are there now in England that have the use and exercise of a knight? that is to say, that he knoweth his horse, and his horse him, ready to a point to have all things that belongeth to a knight; a horse that is according and broken after its kind, his armour and harness meet and fitting."*

"I would," continues the father of English printing, "it pleased our sovereign lord that twice or thrice in a year he would cry jousts of peace, to the end that every knight should have horse and harness, and also the use and craft of a knight; and also to tourney, and the best to have a prize, a diamond or jewel. The exercises of chivalry are not used and honoured as they were in ancient time, when the noble acts of the knights of England that used chivalry were renowned through the universal world. O ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry? What do ye now but go to the bains and play at dice? Alas! what do ye but sleep and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry? Leave this, leave it, and reade the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Launcelot, of Tristrem, of Galaod, of Perceval, of Perceforest, of Gawayn, and many more. There shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentilness."†

To this testimony of the decline of chivalry must be added the important fact, that in 1439 people petitioned parliament for liberty to commute by a pecuniary fine the obligation to receive knighthood. This change of manners did not occur, as is generally supposed, in consequence of the use of gunpowder; for during the civil wars in England artillery was seldom and but partially used in the field, and, except at the great battle of Tewkesbury, in the year 1471, that arm of power had no effect on the general issue of battles. The cavalry and infantry were arranged in the old system: the lance was the weapon of those of gentle birth, while the bow and the bill were used by people of inferior state. Comines, who wrote about the close of the fifteenth century, says, that the archers formed the main strength of a battle.*

Though the civil wars had injured, they had not altogether destroyed the spirit of chivalry. There was yet enough of it remaining among the people to have borne its old shape and appearance, if England had once more been possessed of a Black Prince or a Harry Monmouth. But we have no such sovereign; and the increasing use of gunpowder effectually prevented the return of chivalric customs in battle. The feelings of a nation are reflected in its literature; and we find that the taste of the English people was altogether in favour of romances and histories of chivalry, as Caxton's various publications prove. The declamation of Caxton against the degeneracy of the age, which has been already cited, must not be interpreted literally in all its points. Romance writers, like moralists, had before praised the past, at the expense of the present times. So early as the thirteenth century, Thomas of Erceldoune, called the Rhymer, had bewailed the depravity of his contemporaries, and had likened the degeneracy of his age to the change which the approaching winter must produce upon the appearance of the fields and groves,

"This semly somers day,
In winter it is nought sen:
This greves (groves), waxen al gray,
That in her time were grene:
So dos this world I say,
Y wis and nought at wene;
The gode bene al oway,
That our elders have bene
To abide."†

Caxton's mind was full of the high interest of chivalry, and it was very natural of him to lament that the same enthusiasm did not warm the hearts of others. But he must have considered the feelings of chivalry as dormant, and not extinct, or he would never have addressed the public in the manner he did at the close of his preface to his edition of the romances relating to Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. He printed the work, he says, "to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and

* Caxton, of the Order of Chivalry or Knighthood. † Ibid.

* Comines, vol. i., p. 31.
† Sir Tristrem, Scott's edition, Fytte first, st. 2.

Digitized by Google

virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished, and oft put to shame and rebuke, humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and many noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renommée."

His question, how many knights of England were there in England that had the use and exercise of chivalry, could have been answered by many accomplished cavaliers. The King, at the very time when Caxton wrote, was giving licenses to his subjects to progress into foreign countries, and perform feats of arms; and foreign princes, barons, and knights, came into England, under royal protection, to grace our tilts and tournaments.* Every marriage, and other interesting circumstances in the lives of the nobility, was celebrated by knightly shows in honour of arms and of the ladies.

The forms of chivalry appeared more splendid than before, as chivalry approached its downfall. Henry VII., the least warlike of our sovereigns, created knights with remarkable brilliancy of ceremony; and the jousts and tournaments in the days of his son and successor would have graced the best ages of chivalry. But Henry VIII. had none of the virtues of a true knight, and his conduct to his wives was any thing but chivalric.† He displayed his great strength and activity of person in the tournament, because that amusement was one of English custom, but he would as readily have engaged in any other exercise more strictly gymnastic. He affected, however, to joust from true feelings of knighthood; for he used on these occasions to wear on his head a lady's sleeve full of diamonds. He was as famous for his tournaments as Edward III. had been for his battles. In many of the early years of his reign he was perpetually breaking spears, or fighting at barriers with a two-handed sword, and to his rank, if not to his skill, the prize was generally adjudged. But his skill was sometimes undoubted; for, like the knights of old, he occasionally fought in disguise,* and yet conquered; and he encountered, with similar success, men of other countries, who, for various reasons of affairs or pleasure, travelled to England.

The jousts and tournaments in the days of Henry VIII. are extremely interesting, as reflecting a state of manners different from those of earlier times. Tournaments were no longer simple representations of chivalry, but splendid pageants were united to them.

In June, 1512, a solemn tournament was kept at Greenwich, the King and Sir Charles Brandon undertaking to abide all comers. To this goodly show the ladies were the first that approached, dressed in white and red silk, and seated upon horses, the colours of whose trappings corresponded with those of the ladies' dresses. A fountain curiously made of russet satin, having eight mouths spouting water, then followed. Within this piece of splendour and ingenuity, sat a knight armed at all points. The next person in the procession was a lady covered with black silk dropped with fine silver, riding on a courser barded in a similar manner. A knight in a horse-litter then followed. When

* Raymer's Fœdera.

† Warton pleasantly observes, that had Henry never murdered his wives, his politeness to the fair sex would remain unimpeached.

* Holingshed, p. 805, 806, &c. Henry's passion for disguising himself was singular, and carried him beyond the bounds of chivalric decorum. "Once on a time the King in persom, accompanied by the Earls of Essex, Wiltshire, and other noblemen to the number of twelve, came suddenly in the morning into the Queen's chamber, all apparelled in short coats of Kentish kendall, with hoods on their heads, and hose of the same, every one of them carrying his bow and arrow, and a sword and a buckler, like outlaws, or Robin Hood's men. Whereat the Queen, the ladies, and all other there were abashed, as well for the strange sight, as also for their sudden coming, — and after certain dances and pastimes made, they departed. Holingshed, p. 805.

Digitized by Google

the fountain arrived at the tilting ground, the ladies rode round the lists, and so did the fountain, and the knight within the litter. Two goodly coursers caparisoned for the jousts, then were introduced. The two knights left the fountain and the litter and mounted them, the surprised spectators beholding the King and Sir Charles Brandon.

The challenge to all comers was then proclaimed by the heralds; and while the trumpets were sounding all the inspiring notes of chivalry, at one end of the lists entered Sir Thomas Knevet in a castle of coal black, and over the castle was written 'The dolorous Castle,' The Earl of Essex, the Lord Howard, and other knights splendidly attired, then pricked into the lists, and with Sir Thomas encountered the King and Sir Charles Brandon. The details of the tournament have not been recorded; the chronicler contenting himself with observing, that the King broke most spears, and that the prize fell to his lot.*

Henry displayed his joy at the birth of his son, Prince Arthur, by a solemn tournament. The court removed from Richmond to Westminster. The King himself determined to tourney, and he selected four knights to aid him. He styled himself "Cure Loial," the Lord William Earl of Devonshire was called "Bon Voloire," Sir Thomas Knevet, "Bon Espoir," and Sir Edward Nevill chose for his tourneying name "Valiant Desire." These four noble spirits were called "Les quatre chevaliers de la forrest Salvigne." Their names were written upon a goodly table, which was suspended from a tree, curiously wrought; the knights engaging to run at the tilt against all comers. Accordingly, by the prescribed time, a court in the palace was prepared for the games, and the Queen and her ladies were conducted to a gallery richly hung inside with cloth of gold, and on the outside with cloth of arras. A pageant preceded the sports of chivalry. It is described as representing a forest, with rocks, hills, and vales, with trees, herbs and flowers, made of green velvet, damask and silk. Six men clad as foresters stood at different parts; and in the midst of the forest was a castle apparently made of gold, and before the gate sat a gentleman splendidly apparelled, weaving a garland of roses for the prize. The spectators imagined that the pageant was drawn into the court by a lion and an antelope, who were led by men in the guise of savages. When the pageant rested before the Queen, the foresters blew their horns, and from different parts of the forest the four knights issued armed at all points and mounted on their war-steeds. Each knight carried his lance, a plume of feathers surmounted his crest, and his name was embroidered on the bases of gold which covered his horse. At the moment of these knights starting from the forest, and the court resounding with the noise of drums and trumpets, the Earl of Essex, the Lord Thomas Howard, and many other nobles, entered the court, and then the jousts commenced. But who deserved best that day, the historian has not mentioned. The next afternoon the Queen repaired to her gallery; and instead of the King and his aids being introduced in a pageant, they entered the court under splendid pavilions of cloths of gold and velvet. On the other side of the lists Sir Charles Brandon entered in the guise of a recluse or religious person, his horse being also caparisoned in the simplest form. No drum or other sound of minstrelsy ushered his approach; but he slowly and silently advanced to the Queen, and presented to her a writing, whose effect was, that if she pleased he would tourney in her presence, but if it suited her not, he would depart as he came. The Queen smiled and bowed assent; and Sir Charles, retiring to one end of the lists, threw aside the disguise of his splendid armour. The young Henry Guilford, enclosed in a device or a pageant made like a castle or turret, then approached the Queen, and obtained her leave to engage in the tilt. Next appeared the Marquis Dorset and Sir Thomas Bullen, like two pilgrims from Saint James, in tabards of black velvet, with palmers' hats on their helmets, with long Jacob's staves in their hands, their horse-trappings of black velvet, the harness of men and steeds being set with scallop shells of fine gold and strips of black velvet, every strip being also adorned with golden scallop shells. Next came

* Holingshed, p. 815.

Digitized by Google

the Lord Henry of Buckingham, Sir Giles Capell, and many other knights. The sports then commenced, and as on the preceding day the King won the prize. In the evening the ambassadors and the nobility supped with the royal family, and after the banquet the King with the Queen and lords and ladies entered the white-hall of the palace. Songs, dancing, and minstrels, succeeded, and in the midst of the merriment the King retired unseen. Soon afterwards the trumpets at the end of the hall began to sound, and a pageant upon wheels was brought in. A gentleman richly attired descended from it, and approaching the Queen in a supplicatory attitude, told her that in a garden of pleasure there was an arbour of gold, wherein were lords and ladies much desirous to show pastime to the Queen and court, if they might be permitted so to do. The Queen replied, that she was very desirous to see them and their pastime. A cloth of arras was therefore drawn from the front of the pageant, and rich representations of nature saluted the eye. Six ladies, dressed with more bravery than the dull chronicler can describe, were seen in the arbour, supported by the King and five gallant knights. The whole scene appeared one blaze of gold. After the applause which this splendour elicited had subsided, the lords and ladies descended from the pageant, the minstrels sounded their music of gaiety, and the whole court mixed in the dance. And the people, too, had their amusement; for some portion of the simplicity of ancient times remained, and royalty was not thought to lose any thing of its dignity by being presented to the public eye. The pageant was conveyed to the end of the palace, there to tarry till the dances were finished, and so to have received the lords and ladies again; but suddenly the rude and joyous people ran to it, and tore and rent and spoilt it; and the Lord Steward and his officers, seeing that they could not drive them away without a conflict and disturbance, suffered the pageant to be destroyed.*

The field of the cloth of gold has been so often described in works of ready access, that I should not be warranted in attempting to picture again its gay and sparkling scene. But some of its circumstances have not been sufficiently noticed; and they are so expressive of the chivalric feelings of the time that a history of chivalry would be imperfect without a description of them.

The whole ceremonial of the meeting between Henry VIII. and Francis I. was regulated by Cardinal Wolsey,

> "One certes, that promised no element
> In such a business."

And the principle which guided this right reverend cardinal of York was political subtlety, and not knightly liberality. The English sojourned at Guisnes, the French at Ardres. On the morning of the first royal interview, the two kings and their numerous followers left their respective pavilions at the signal of a gun fired at Guisnes, and returned from Ardres. They slowly measured the way to the intermediate plain in the silence of apprehension; for the cardinal's ungenerous suspicions had spread through either host. Once each party halted, expecting an attack; and when the noise which occasioned the alarm died away, the procession recommenced its course, confident that the fears of the other side were greater than their own. The kings met, and so anxious were they to display their feelings of friendship that they embraced on horseback. They then dismounted, and having renewed their caresses, they went into a pavilion of golden cloth; nor did they separate till dinner and familiar conversation had frozen the etiquette imposed on their manners by the cardinal.

The next morning the two Queens interchanged visits, and spent some hours in dancing and other amusements. These interchanges of courtesies warmed the minds of the two sovereigns to chivalric generousness. One morning Francis rode to Guisnes with scarcely any attendance. He walked through the English guard, who drew back in astonishment, and he did not stop till he had reached the chamber where his brother monarch lay asleep. Francis soon awoke him; and Henry, immediately comprehending his motives, declared, in the spirit and language of chivalry, that he yielded himself his prisoner, and plighted his faith. He then threw round Francis's

* Holingshed, p. 807, 808.

Digitized by Google

neck a collar of great value. and Francis gave him a bracelet of superior worth, each king entreating the other to wear the gift for his sake. The two monarchs then became brothers in arms; and with twelve companions undertook to deliver all persons at jousts, tourney, and barriers.

The chivalric exercises continued for five days, in the presence of the two queens and the nobility of England and France. French and English knights were the only part of the chivalry of Europe who answered the challenge: for chivalry could not then, as in former days, smooth down personal heats and feuds; and therefore no subject of the wide extended empire of Charles V. appeared on the field of the cloth of gold. The only weapons used were spears; but they were impelled with such vigour, as to be so often broken, that the spectators' eyes were scarred with splinters. Each day the challengers varied their harness and devices, and each day the two kings ran together so valiantly that the beholders had great joy.*

"Each following day
Became the last day's master, till the next
Made former wonders it's. * * *
* * * * The two kings,
Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,
As presence did present them; him in eye,
Still him in praise; and being present both,
'Twas said, they saw but one; and no discerner
Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns
(For so they praise 'em) by their heralds challenged
The noble spirit to arms, they did perform
Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous story,
Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
That Bevis was believed.†

There was a considerable portion of chivalry among the nobility of Henry VIII. In some respects, however, it partook more of the romance of the Troubadour than the genuine character of knighthood: for the tale that Lord Surrey travelled from court to court proclaiming the peerless beauty of his lady-love, and challenging all gainsayers to a joust *à l'outrance* is totally void of truth;‡ and it only appears that his Lordship fostered for the fair Geraldine a sentimental affection without distinct views. It was altogether a poet's dream; and the Italian muse, who was at that time worshipped in England, favoured such fond imaginings.

Much of the literature of the times was chivalric. Every noble spirit loved the Knight's Tale of Chaucer. The French and Spanish stories of warriors and dames were transfused into English; as was the fine Chronicle of Froissart by Lord Berners at the command of the King; and the vigorous, rich, and picturesque style of our language in those days was admirably adapted for a history of the most brilliant age of knighthood. That the spirit of chivalry was not extinct in the reign of Henry VIII. is evident from this work of Lord Berners, for the ordinary diction of the day was used; and it was to the full as expressive of the gallantry and grace of the olden time as the original work itself.

The education of our English gentry was nearly as chivalric then as at any previous period of our history. Boys were sent to school to learn to read at four years of age. At six they were taught languages and the first principles of manners: from ten to twelve dancing and music were added to their accomplishments, and politeness was particularly encouraged. At fourteen they were initiated into the sports of the field which prepared them for the ruder exercise of arms. At sixteen they were taught to joust, to fight at the barriers, to manage the war-horse, to assail castles, to support the weight of armour, and to contend in feats of arms with their companions. And there their education terminated.* When they went to battle, they demeaned themselves worthy of their education.

* Holingshed, p. 85, &c.

† Shakspeare, Henry VIII., Act i., scene 1.

‡ Dr. Nott, in his life of Lord Surrey, prefixed to the works of His Lordship and Sir Thomas Wyatt, has by the evidence of facts completely overthrown this pleasing tale.

* These curious particulars are to be gathered, as Dr. Nott remarks, from the following passage in Hardynge's Chronicle.

"And as lords' sons been set, at four year age,
At school to learn the doctrine of letture;
And after six to have them in language
And sit at meet, seemly in all nurture:
At ten and twelve to revel is their cure,
To dance and sing, and speak of gentleness:
At fourteen year they shall to field I sure,
At hunt the deer, and catch at hardiness.

Digitized by Google

In all the military expeditions of the English on the Continent, the soldiers of either army were continually challenging each other to break a lance for their ladies' sake. Sir John Wallop in his march with a British army to Landrecy, in the year 1543, went to the town of Terouenne, and, recollecting that the commandant was an old acquaintance, he addressed him in the true spirit of chivalry, that if there were any gentlemen under his charge willing to break a lance for their ladies' sake, six gentlemen should be sent from the English army to meet them. The challenge was accepted, the jousts were held, and, after this fine old chivalric mode of displaying his friendship, Sir John Wallop held on his course to Landrecy.*

"For deer to hunt and slay, and see them bleed
An hardiment giveth to his courage.
And also in his wit he giveth heed,
Imagining to take them at advantage.
At sixteen year to warry and to wage,
To joust and ride and castles to assail,
To shirmish als, and make sicker scurage,
And set his watch for peril nocturnal.

"And every day his armour to essay,
In feats of arms with some of his meynie;
His might to prove, and what that he do may
If that he were in such a jeopardy
Of war befall, that by necessity
He might algates with weapons him defend.
Thus should he learn in his priority
His weapons all. in armes to dispend."

See to the same effect, the Paston letters, vol. iii., 34, 35, &c.

The early part of the sixteenth century forms a very interesting æra of British chivalry; for it introduces to our notice James IV. of Scotland, a hero both of knighthood and romance. He was as expert and graceful in tournaments and jousts as any cavalier who was the theme of history or poetry. On occasion of his marriage with Margaret of England, his chivalric shows were splendid beyond example. He was wont to personate King Arthur, or to take the title and appearance of an imaginary creature, called the Savage Knight. His tilt-yards reflected the glories of the last king of the Britons, and the knights of the Round Table, or represented a wild and romantic country, with Highlanders clad in savage dresses guarding the barriers. Like a knight of the by-gone time, he was a pilgrim as well as a soldier, and we will hope, for the purity of earlier days of chivalry, that his heroic predecessors did not often, like himself, turn aside from their pious peregrinations to wander amidst the bowers of castles, with ladies fair.

The romantic gallantry of his disposition was so well known, that cooler politicians used it to the purposes of their ambition. The French king, Louis XII., was abandoned by most of his allies, and was anxious to renew the ancient alliance of France with Scotland; yet England and Scotland were at that time at peace, and the two countries appeared to be united in friendship by the marriage of James with Margaret, the King of England's sister. But Louis knew the character of the man whose aid he required, and he played upon it with admirable dexterity. In 1504, he sent, as his ambassador to the Scottish court, Bernard Stuart, Lord of Aubigny, one of the most distinguished cavaliers of France. This envoy admirably supported the object of his master: he soon won the affections of James, and his discourses on wars and tournaments dis-

* This curious circumstance is mentioned in a journal of Sir John Wallop's expedition, which Dr. Nott dug out of the State-Paper Office. The whole passage is amusing. "July 31. Wallop advances to Bettune. Passing by Terouenne, he attempts to draw out the garrison of that place, but fails. The French defeated in a skirmish. Wallop says, that he sent a letter to the commandment of Terouenne, an old acquaintance, that if he had any gentlemen under his charge, who would break a staff for their ladies' sake, he would appoint six gentlemen to meet them. The challenge is accepted, and the conditions are fixed. Mr. Howard Peter Carew, Markham, Shelly of Calais, with his own two men, Cawverly and Hall, are the English appellants. They all acquit themselves gallantry at the jousts. Hall, at his first course, did break his staff galliardly, in the midst of the Frenchmen's cuirass. Markham stroke another on his head-piece, and had like to have overthrown him. Peter Carew stroke his very well and had one broken on him. Cawverly was reported to have made the fairest course; but by the evil running of the Frenchman's horse, which fled out of the course, he was struck under the arm, and run through the body into the back, and taken into the town, where he was well treated. I wish to God, said Wallop, the next kinsman I had, not being my brother, had excused him."

Digitized by Google

posed the King to love the chivalric French.

A few years afterwards Louis, still continuing to play on his chivalric feelings, made his wife, Anne of Britanny, choose James for her knight and champion, to protect her from all her enemies. The idea of winning by this scheme the Scottish King to the purposes of France originated with Andrew Forman, Bishop of Moray, the Scottish ambassador at Paris, who, to promote his own aggrandizement, would have sacrificed king and country.* The agent of the scheme was La Motte, the French ambassador at Edinburgh, who was as skilful as his martial predecessor, the Lord of Aubigny, in flattering James to his ruin. He presented him letters from the French Queen, wherein, taking the style of a high-born damsel in distress, she termed him her knight, and, assuring him she had suffered much blame in defence of his honour, she beseeched him to advance but three steps into the English territory with his army, for the sake of his mistress. These letters were accompanied by a present of 14,000 crowns, and a ring from her own finger.† The chivalry and vanity of James were roused by these appeals, and he became the willing tool of French ambition.

The circumstances which succeeded his allying himself with France fall not within my province to detail. The battle of Flodden Field was their crown and conclusion; and although there was nothing chivalric in the battle itself, yet a few matters which preceded it come within my subject. Indeed, in the times regarding which I am writing, chivalry was no longer a national distinction, and therefore cannot be marked in public affairs; its lights fell only upon a few individuals.

On the fifth of September, the Earl of Surrey,* who commanded the English forces, despatched a herald from Alnwick to the Scottish camp, offering James battle on a particular day, (Friday, the 9th of September, 1513,) and James, like a gallant knight, accepted the challenge. He then removed his camp from Ford,† and took a strong position on the ridge of Flodden hill, "one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot." On the sixth, the English reached Woollerhaugh, a place within three miles of the Scottish camp, and observing the admirable position of the foe, the Earl of Surrey formed a scheme which, he hoped, would make them relinquish their advantage. Knowing the King's undaunted courage, and high sense of honour, he wrote a letter, subscribed by himself and all the great men in his army, reproaching him for having changed his ground, after he had accepted the offer of battle, and challenging him to descend, like a brave and honourable prince, into the spacious vale of Millfield, that lay between the two armies, and there decide the quarrel on fair and equal terms.‡ This scheme failed; for James was not at that moment so ridiculously romantic as to forego an advantage which his skill had obtained; and he only replied that he should expect the English on the day appointed for battle. Surrey would have been mad to have attacked him in his present position; and he, therefore,

* Pinkerton's History of Scotland, vol ii., p. 85, &c.

† Drummond, 140, &c. Buchanan, xiii., 25.

"For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a torquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France's Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest."
Marmion, canto v.

* He was afterwards Duke of Norfolk, and great grandfather to the Earl of Surrey, who was mentioned by me, *ante*.

† It has been generally thought that James, forgetting both his own wife and the Queen of France, lost much time at Ford, in making love to a Lady Heron, while his natural son, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, was the paramour of Miss Heron the daughter. Dr. Lingard (History of England, vol. vi., p. 31, n.) seems inclined to doubt this tale, because James had only six days to take three castles and a fair lady's heart. What time was absolutely necessary for these sieges and assaults, the learned Doctor has not stated. However, to speak seriously, the story has no foundation in truth; and it only arose from the beauty of Lady Heron, and the reputed gallantry of the Scottish King.

‡ Henry's History of Great Britain, book vi., ch. 1, part ii., s. 1.

Digitized by Google

on the morning of the 8th of September, formed his army into marching order, crossed the Till near Wooller, progressed towards Berwick, and rested at Barmore Wood. The Scottish nobles apprehended that it was the intention of the English to plunder the fertile country of the Merse; and they therefore importuned James to march to the defence of his own dominions; but the King declined, alleging that his honour was engaged to remain in his present station until the morrow, which was the appointed time for battle. On that morrow Surrey directed his course to the Tweed; but, suddenly changing his line of march, he repassed the Till at the bridge of Twissel. Before the army had entirely passed, Robert Borthwick, the commander of James's artillery, entreated the permission of his sovereign to destroy the bridge, and thus break the enemy's force; but the King gave a stern denial, declaring that he wished to have all his enemies before him, and to fight them fairly.* By this fatal folly James lost all the advantages of his position; for the English formed behind him, and Flodden was open and accessible to them. If personal bravery, independent of sageness, had been the character of a knight, James deserved all chivalric honours; for, disdaining the counsel to behold the battle afar off, he mingled boldly in the thickest of the press. The field was won by the English archers; but James did not live to repent the enthusiasm of his chivalry, which had cost his country so much blood, for he was killed within a lance's length of Lord Surrey. The romantic chivalry of James was deeply injurious to Scotland. She had, in his reign, attained a considerable eminence of national prosperity, but the defeat at Flodden hurled her from her station. The country was "left a prey to foreign influence and intrigue, which continued till it ceased to form a separate kingdom: her finances were exhausted, her leaders corrupted, her dignity degraded, her commerce and her agriculture neglected."*

* Pitscottie, p. 116, &c.
† Pinkerton, book xii.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST YEARS OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND.

The Chivalric Feelings of the Nation supported by Spenser—And by Sir Philip Sidney.—Allusions to Sidney's Life—Particularly his kindly Consideration.—Chivalric Politeness of the Age of Elizabeth.—The Earl of Oxford.—Tilts in Greenwich Park.—Sir Henry Lee.—Chivalry reflected in the popular Amusements.—Change of Manners.—Reign of James the First.—Tournaments ceased on Prince Henry's Death.—Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury—Chivalric Fame of his Family—His Character.—His Inferiority to the Knights of yore.—Decline of Chivalric Education.—Important Change of Knighthood by the Parliament of Charles the First.—Application of Chivalric honours to men of civil Station—Knights made in the Field.—Carpet Knights.—Knights of the Bath.—Full Account of the Ancient Ceremonies of creating Knights of the Bath.

The reigns of Edward VI. and Mary present nothing to our purpose; but the Elizabethan age is fraught with interest. Our continued intercourse with Italy promoted anew the love for romance and allegory, which religious controversy had for some years been gradually stifling. Though classical literature had revived in Italy, the muse of chivalry was most fondly worshipped, and the mind delighted to wander amidst the enchanted garden of Armida. Our well travelled ancestors brought home with them the love for romantic poetry and allegory; and Spenser's genius, influenced by the prevailing taste of his day, chose Ariosto for his model, and painted the wild adventures of heroes and ladies. Chivalry was the supposed perfection of man's moral nature; and the English poet, therefore, described the chief private virtues exemplified in the conduct of knights: it being his wish, as he expressed his mind to Sir Walter Raleigh, to fashion a gentleman or noble person in valorous and gentle discipline. His principal hero, he in whom the image of a brave knight was perfected in the twelve moral virtues, was King Arthur; and the poet freely used the circumstances and sentiments in the romances relating to that British hero, and also the other popular tales of chivalry.

Digitized by Google

If poetry nourished the love of valorous knighthood, learning was equally its friend; and when Spencer addressed Sidney as the noble and virtuous gentleman, and most worthy of all titles of learning and chivalry, he spoke the feeling of his age, that the accomplishments of the mind were best displayed in martial demeanour. At the birth of Sidney, as Ben Jonson says, all the muses met. In reading the Arcadia, it is impossible to separate the author from the work, or to think that he has not poured forth all those imaginings of his fancy which his heart had marked for its own. He has portrayed knights and damsels valiant and gentle, placing all their fond aspirations of happiness in a rural life, and despising the pageantry of courts for the deep harmonies of nature. But Sidney's mind was chivalric as well as romantic; and he was so fond of reverting to the fabled ages of his country, that it was his intention to turn all the stories of the Arcadia into the admired legends of Arthur and his knights.* To modern taste the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney presents no charms: yet, by a singular contradiction, the author, who was the personification of his book, is regarded as the model of perfection.

"The plume of war! with early laurels crown'd,
The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay."†

The popularity, however, of the Arcadia, in the Elizabethan age,‡ and the high reputation of the author, showed the sympathy of the world in those days for the romance of chivalry.

The few circumstances in the brief life of Sidney are too well known for me to be justified in detailing them: but I may remind my readers that he was born at Penshurst in Kent, in the year 1544; that he was accomplished in literature and chivalry by study and travel; that he was a courtier of Elizabeth, and yet could oppose her dearest fancies, if they were hostile to the interests of his country; that his opposition to her projected union with Anjou was spirited and well reasoned; that his love for his sister and his wife was the softening grace of that desire for chivalric valour which carried him with his uncle the Earl of Leicester to the plains of Flanders, in the year 1586; and when he received his mortal wound before the town of Zutphen, that he resigned a cup of water to the poor soldier whose lot he thought was more distressing than his own. His courage, his gallantry, and grace were his best known qualities, and those for which England and, indeed, Europe, lamented his death. His funeral in St. Paul's was a national one, the first instance in our history of honours of that description; and for many months afterwards not an individual in the court or city appeared in public, except in a garment of black: — in such high account were chivalric virtues held in the days of Elizabeth.

One feature of his character but little noticed by modern writers was very remarkable in those days, and will be better valued now than it was then. All who enjoyed the hospitality of Penshurst were equal in the consideration of the host: there were no odious distinctions of rank or fortune; "the dishes did not grow coarser as they receded from the head of the table," and no huge salt-cellar divided the noble from the ignoble guests.*

* So reported in the conversation of Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden.

† Thomson's Seasons. Summer, l. 1511.

‡ The Arcadia was popular so late as the days of Charles I., as may be learned from a passage in the work of a snarling satirist, who wanted to make women mere square-elbowed family drudges. "Let them learn plain works of all kind, so they take heed of too open seaming. Instead of songs and music, let them learn cookerie and laundrie; and instead of reading Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, let them read the Grounds of Good Huswifery. I like not a female poetess at any hand." Powell's Tom of all Trades, p. 47.

* This was the honourable distinction of the Sidney family in general, as we learn from Ben Jonson's lines on Penshurst.

"Whose liberal board doth flow
With all that hospitality doth know!
Where comes no guest but is allow'd to eat,
Without his fear, and of thy Lord's own meat.
Where the same beer and bread, and self-same wine,
That is His Lordship's, shall be also mine."
Gifford's Ben Jonson, vol. viii., p. 254.

The practice of making a distinction at the table by means of a salt-cellar was very proper in early times, when the servants as well as the master of a family with his wife and children dined at one long table. It became odious, however, when a baron made this mark of servility

Digitized by Google

The polite gracefulness of Sidney was not rare in this time; and there was not a courtier, who, if placed in similar circumstances to those of Sir Walter Raleigh, that would not have cast his handsome plush cloak in the mire to serve for the Queen, as a foot-cloth. Tournaments as well as masks were the amusements of the age. The prize was always delivered by Elizabeth, who never thought that age could deprive her of the privileges of beauty. Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, was more skilful in these manly exercises of chivalry than all the other courtiers, even than Sidney, who, like a magnanimous knight, was eloquent in his praise.

"Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that sweet en'my France:
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Townsfolks my strength a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise:
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance,
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shoot awry! The true cause is,
Stella look'd on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race."

Astrophel and Stella, st. 41.

The friendship of Sidney for him for awhile was the only circumstance which we know to his honour, and it implies the possession of virtuous qualities in the Earl. A considerable portion of coxcombry belonged to most of Elizabeth's courtiers; and the noble Lord in question was distinguished, according to Stow, for introducing into this country embroidered and perfumed gloves.

The Queen's band of gentlemen-pensioners formed a perfect illustration of the chivalric principle of the dignity of obedience, for it was the highest ambition of the nobility to be enrolled among them. Their tilts in Greenwich Park would have done honour to the brightest days of chivalry. But still more select were the knights-tilters, a fraternity founded on the gallant resolve of Sir Henry Lee to appear in the royal tilt-yard on the anniversary of the Queen's birth in honour of Her Majesty. Some of these knights were preux chevaliers indeed. The Queen's glove accidentally dropped from her hand during a tournament, and the Earl of Cumberland had the good fortune to recover it. Fancying herself some dame of chivalry, she desired the Earl to retain it; and he with a gallant spirit, regarding it as the favour of a lady, had it set in diamonds, and always wore it on festival occasions in the high crowned hats which had superseded the helmet. For so polite was the court of Elizabeth, that

"Ne any there doth brave or valiant seem,
Unless that some gay mistress' badge he wear."*

From 1571 to 1590 Sir Henry Lee was the Queen's champion; and being then worn down with age and infirmity, he resigned his office to the Earl of Cumberland. The ceremony is admirably expressive of the romantic feeling of the time and the vanity of Elizabeth. It was partly a mask and partly a chivalric show. On the 17th of November, 1590, Sir Henry Lee and the Earl, having performed their services in arms, presented themselves to the Queen at the foot of the stairs under her gallery-window in the tilt-yard, Westminster, where Her Majesty was seated, surrounded by the French ambassador, her ladies, and the chief nobility. Soft music then saluted the ears of the Queen, and one of the royal singers chaunted these lines:

"My golden locks time hath to silver turn'd,
(Oh time, too swift, and swiftness never ceasing!)
My youth 'gainst age, and age at youth hath spurn'd;
But spurn'd in vain, youth, waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, and youth, flowers fading been,
Duty, faith, and love, are roots, and evergreen.

"My helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
And lovers' songs shall turn to holy psalms:
A man at arms must now sit on his knees,
And feed on prayers that are old age's alms,

separate his gentle from his noble friends. This was feudal pride, whereas chivalric courtesy would rather have placed the guests in generous equality about a round table.

* Spenser, *Colin Clout's come Home again.*

Digitized by Google

And so from court to cottage I depart:
My saint is sure of my unspotted heart,

"And when I sadly sit in homely cell,
I'll teach my swains this carol for a song:
'Blest be the hearts that think my sovereign well:
Curs'd be the souls that think to do her wrong.'
Goddess! vouchsafe this aged man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight."

A pageant of a temple of the vestal virgins rose out of the earth. Certain rich gifts were taken from the altar by the attending virgins, and with a votive tablet, inscribed "To Eliza," was presented to the Queen. Sir Henry Lee offered his armour before a crowned pillar at the temple-gate, and then presented the Earl of Cumberland to the Queen, humbly beseeching her to accept him as her knight to continue the yearly exercises. Her Majesty having accepted this offer, the aged knight armed the Earl and mounted him on his horse. He threw over his own person a gown of black velvet, and covered his head in lieu of a helmet with a bonnet of the country fashion.*

The popular amusements of England corresponded with those of the court. "I remember at Mile-end-Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn, I was Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show," is the avowal of Master Shallow; and thus while tournaments were held by the court and nobility, other classes of society diverted themselves with scenic representations of the ancient chivalry. The recreations of the common people at Christmas and bridals, an author of the time assures us, consisted in hearing minstrels sing or recite stories of old times, as the tale of Sir Topas, the Reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick, Adam Bell, and Clymme of the Clough, and other old romances or historical rhymes. And in another place the same author speaks of companies that were desirous to hear of old adventures, and valiances of noble knights in times past.† The domestic amusements of the age are thus enumerated by Burton: "The ordinary recreations which we have in winter are cards, tables and dice, shovel-board, chess-play, the philosopher's game, small trunks, billiards, music, masks, singing, dancing, ule games, catches, purposes, questions: *merry tales of errant knights*, kings, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, fairies, goblins, friars, witches, and the rest.*

In one respect, however, manners underwent a great and distinct change. In a former chapter, it was mentioned that the Italians invented the long and pointed sword; and it seems from many scattered allusions to customs in works of continental history, that it gradually superseded the use of the broader weapons of knighthood. In Elizabeth's reign the foreign or Italian rapier was a very favourite weapon. "Sword-and-buckler fight begins to grow out of use," is the lament of a character in an old comedy. "I am sorry for it. I shall never see good manhood again. If it be once gone, this poking fight of rapier and dagger will come up, then a tall man, and a good sword-and-buckler man will be spitted like a cat or rabbit."† The allusions to this state of manners are more marked and numerous in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," but with that comedy my readers are of course familiar.

For some of the early years of James I. tournaments divided with masks the

* Nicholls's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. iii., p. 41, &c.

† Puttenham, Arte of English Poesie, book ii., c. 9, and 19.

* Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 271. This passage brings to mind a corresponding one in Wilson's Arte of Rhetoricke, printed in 1553. "If there be any old tale or strange history, well and wittily applied to some man living, all men love to hear it. As if one were called Arthur, some good fellow that were well acquainted with King Arthur's book, and the knights of the Round Table, would want no matter to make good sport, and for a need would dub him knight of the Round Table, or else prove him to be one of his kin, or else (which were much) prove him to be Arthur himself."

† "The Two angry Women of Abingdon." The sword and buckler fighting was the degeneracy of the ancient chivalry; and Smithfield, which had shone as the chief tilting ground of London was in the sixteenth century, according to Stow, "Called Ruffians' Hall," by reason it was the usual place of frays and common fighting, during the time that sword and bucklers were in use. When every *serving-man*, from the base to the best, carried a *buckler* at his back, which hung by the hilt or pommel of his sword." Alas, for the honour of chivalry!

Digitized by Google

favour of the court. As soon as Prince Henry reached his sixteenth year, he put himself forth in a more heroic manner than was usual with princes of his time, by tiltings, barriers, and other exercises on horseback, the martial discipline of gentle peace.* After his death chivalric sports fell quite out of fashion.

"Shields and swords
Cobwebb'd and rusty; not a helm affords
A spark of lustre, which were wont to give
Light to the world, and make the nation live."†

This was the lamentation of Ben Jonson; and another poet thus describes, in the person of Britannia, the feelings of the nation:

"Alas who now shall grace my tournaments
Or honour me with deeds of chivalry?
What shall become of all my merriments,
My ceremonies, shows of heraldry,
And other rites?"‡

Military exercises being entirely disused, the mask, with its enchantments of music, poetry, painting, and dancing, was the only amusement of the court and nobility.

And now in these last days of chivalry in England a very singular character appeared upon the scene. This was Edward Herbert, afterwards Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was born at Eaton, in Shropshire, in the year 1581. His family were of the class of gentry, and had for many years executed various royal offices of military trust. His grandfather was a staunch royalist in the days of Edward VI., and Queen Mary; and he gained fortune, as well as fame: for it appears that his share of plunder in the wars in the north, and of the forfeited estates of rebels, was the foundation of the family wealth.

The valour of the Herberts rivalled that of the romantic heroes of chivalry. Edward has proudly reverted to his great-great-grandfather, Sir Richard Herbert of Colebrook, as an incomparable hero, who twice passed through a great army of northern men alone, with his pole-axe in his hand, and returned without any mortal hurt. The courage which had been formerly displayed in the battlefield was as times degenerated reserved for private wrongs, and the patriot sank into the duellist. At the close of his life, Edward recollected with pleasure, that one of his brothers had carried with him to the grave the scars of twenty-four wounds, many of them the results of private brawls. Another brother was gentleman of the King's chamber, and the famous master of the revels; and he, too, had given several proofs of his courage in duels.

The infancy of Edward was so sickly that his friends did not think fit to teach him his alphabet till he was seven years old. He would have us believe, however, that he was wise though not early schoolled; for when an infant he understood what was said by others, yet he forebore to speak, lest he should utter something that was imperfect or impertinent. When he began to talk, one of the first inquiries he made was how he had come into the world. He told his nurse, keeper, and others, that he found himself here indeed, but from what cause or beginning or by what means he could not imagine. The nurse stared, and other people wondered at this precocious wisdom; and when he reflected upon the matter in after life he was happy in the thought, that as he found himself in possession of this life, without knowing any thing of the pangs and throes his mother suffered, when doubtless they no less afflicted him than her, so he hoped that his soul would pass to a better life than this, without being sensible of the anguish his body would feel in death.*

He won the acquaintance of the learned languages, and other branches of juvenile literature, with great ease; and when at the age of twelve he was sent to Oxford, he tells us that he disputed at his first coming in logic, and made in Greek the exercises required in his college oftener than in Latin. He married at the age of fifteen, and then applied himself more vigorously than ever to study, particularly the continental languages: but to fence and to ride the great horse were his principal ambition, for such were the exercises in which the chivalry of his time

* Wilson's Life of James, p. 52.

† Ben Jonson, Masque of Prince Henry's Barriers.

‡ G. Wither. Prince Henry's Obsequies. El. 31.

* Life of Edward Lord Herbert, written by himself, p. 16.

Digitized by Google

were educated; — and he aspired to fame in every pursuit. From the same feeling of vanity that urged him to publish his deistical dogmas, he complacently says of himself that no man understood the use of his weapon better than himself, or had more dexterously availed himself thereof on all occasions.*

In the year 1600, he removed with his wife and mother from Montgomery-castle (the seat of his ancestors) to London, and prompted by curiosity rather than ambition he went to court, and as it was the manner of those times for all men to kneel down before the Queen, he was likewise upon his knees in the Presence Chamber, when she passed by to the chapel at Whitehall. As soon as she saw him she stopped, and, swearing her usual oath, demanded, "Who is this?" Upon being made acquainted with his name and circumstances, the Queen looked attentively upon him, and again giving emphasis to her feelings by an oath, she said that it was a pity he was married so young, and thereupon gave him her hand twice to kiss, both times patting him on the cheek. He was made knight of the Bath by James I.; and with his usual vanity declares that his person was amazingly commended by the lords and ladies who attended the ceremony. The most handsome lady of the court pledged her honour for his, and then the strings of silk and gold were taken from his arm. These strings, as I have already mentioned, were worn by all the knights till they had achieved some high deed of arms, or till some lady of honour took them off, and fastened them on her sleeve, saying that she would answer her friend would prove a good knight. Like all other knights of the Bath he swore to do justice to the uttermost of his power, particularly to ladies and gentlewomen wronged in their honour, if they demanded assistance.

Soon after this circumstance, he was wearied both of literary and domestic pursuits, and he resolved to travel in foreign countries. His skill in fencing was now to be brought into play; for he tells us that in France, in his time, there was scarcely any man thought worthy of regard who had not killed another in a duel.* He went to Paris, and was hospitably entertained at the neighbouring castle of Merlon, by Henry de Montmorenci, second son of the great Constable Anne de Montmorenci.

An occasion for exercising his fantastic chivalry soon presented itself. A French cavalier snatched a riband from the bonnet of a young lady, and fastened it to his own hat-band. He refused to return it, and the injured damsel asked the English knight to get it restored to her. He accordingly advanced to the Frenchman, courteously, with his hat in his hand, and desired him to restore the riband. Meeting only with a rude denial, he replied he would make him restore it by force. The Frenchman ran away; but finding himself closely pursued, he turned round to the young lady, and was about to restore her the top-knot, when Sir Edward seized his arm, and said to her, "It was I that gave it." — "Pardon me," quoth she, "it is he that gives it me." Sir Edward observed, "I will not contradict you; but if he presumes to say that I did not constrain him to give it, I will fight with him." No reply was made, and the French gentleman conducted the lady back to the castle. Sir Edward was very anxious for a duel, but none took place; and he was obliged to please his conscience with the reflection, that he had acted agreeably to the oath which he took when inaugurated a knight of the Bath.†

On three other occasions, he sported his chivalry in the cause of the ladies; but the stories of these affairs are poor and uninteresting after this most delectable behaviour in the Montmorenci garden.

For many years Sir Edward lived in the court or the camp, in France or England, seldom visiting his wife in Montgomeryshire, and more frequently busied in private brawls (but his chal-

* Life, p. 46.

* Life, &c., p. 63. Sir Edward was very much annoyed at Paris by a Monsieur Balagny, who enjoyed more attention of the ladies than he did. They used one after another to invite him to sit near them, and when one lady had his company awhile, another would say, "You have enjoyed him long enough, I must have him now." The reason of all this favour was, that he had killed eight or nine men in a single fight, p. 70. This was the degeneracy of chivalry with a vengeance.

† Life p. 60.

Digitized by Google

lenges never ripened into duels) than engaged in philosophical meditation.

In the year 1614, while he was in the service of the Prince of Orange, a trumpeter came from the hostile (the Spanish) army to his with a challenge, — that if any cavalier would fight a single combat for the sake of his mistress, a Spanish knight would meet him. The Prince allowed Sir Edward to accept the challenge. Accordingly a trumpeter was sent to the Spanish army with the answer, that if the challenger were a knight without reproach, Sir Edward Herbert would answer him with such weapons as they should agree upon. But before this herald could deliver his charge, another Spanish trumpeter reached the camp of the Prince of Orange, declaring that the challenge had been given without the consent of the Marquis of Spinola (the commander), who would not permit it. This appeared strange to the Prince and Sir Edward; and on their thinking that the Spaniards might object to the duel taking place in the camp of the challenged, as it was originally proposed, Sir Edward resolved to go to the enemy, and give him his choice of place. He accordingly went; but Spinola would not suffer the duel to be fought. A noble entertainment greeted the Englishman, the Marquis condescending to present to his guest the best of the meat which his carver offered to himself. He expressed no anger that the challenges had been given; for he politely asked his guest of what disease Sir Francis Vere had died. Sir Edward told him, because he had nothing to do. Spinola replied, in allusion to the idleness of the campaign, "And it is enough to kill a General;" and thus impliedly excused any impatient sallies of his young soldiers.

Sir Henry Wotton, the ambassador of the King of England, having mediated a peace between the Prince of Orange and the Spaniards, our knight proceeded on his travels through Germany and Italy. He complimented a nun upon her singing, while all the other Englishmen present were delighted into silence: but he was always ready to speak as well as to fight for the honour of the knighthood of the Bath. "Die whensoever you will," said he to the young lady, "you need change neither voice nor face to be an angel!" These words, he assures us, were fatal, for she died shortly afterwards.

He went to Florence, and was more pleased with a nail, which was at one end iron, and the other gold, than by all the glories of painting and sculpture with which the Etrurian Athens was then fresh and redolent. He sojourned for some time at Rome, but hastily left the city when the Pope was about to bless him. This refusal of an old man's benediction proceeded from the vanity of his character. Though perfectly indifferent to Christianity, when he entered Rome he ostentatiously said to the master of the English college, that he came not to the city to study controversies, but to view its antiquities, and if, without scandal to the religion in which he had been born and educated, he might take this liberty, he would gladly spend some time there. A decorous submission to the usages of Rome would not have gained him the world's talk; and, therefore, he hastily quitted the Consistory when the blessing was about to be given, knowing that such a bold act of contempt on the religion of the place would be bruited every where.

The remainder of his adventures on the Continent is not worthy of record. He returned to England; and, in 1616, he was sent to France as the English ambassador. Previously to his setting off, he engaged to fight a duel, though the day fixed for the circumstance was Sunday; but when he arrived at Paris, on a Saturday night, he refused to accept an invitation of the Spanish ambassador for an interview the next morning, because Sunday was a day, which, as he alleged, he wholly gave to devotion. The spirit of duelling was far more powerful in his mind than the love of conformity to religious decencies; but it cost him nothing; indeed, it only aggrandised his importance to decline the visit of the Spanish ambassador on a Sunday. He remained some time in France, maintaining the honour of his country on all occasions; particularly with reference to the mighty question, whether his coachmen, or that of the Spanish ambassador should take precedence.

Sir Edward was instructed by his court to mediate between Louis XIII.

Digitized by Google

and his Protestant subjects; but, instead of conducting the affair with coolness and political sagacity, he quarrelled with Luines, the Minister of the French king. Complaints of his conduct were sent to England, and he was recalled. The death of the offended statesman happened soon afterwards, and Herbert was again despatched to France.

The next remarkable event in his life was the publication of his book, "*De Veritate*," whose object it was to show the all-sufficiency of natural religion. But he, who denied the necessity of a revelation to the human race, of matters concerning their eternal salvation, fancied that Heaven expressly revealed to him its will that his book should be published. Such are the inconsistences of infidelity!

"A godless regent trembling at a star!"

His amusing autobiography ends with an account of a noise from heaven, when he prayed for a sign of the Divine will, whether or not he should print his book.

Not many other circumstances of his life are on record. He was raised to the Irish peerage in 1625, and, afterwards, was created an English Baron, by the title of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in Shropshire. He published another Latin work, in support of the cause of infidelity, and then gave to the World his History of the Reign of Henry VIII.; a book which has been always characterised, by writers who have never read a line of it, as a master-piece of historic biography; and if gross partiality for his hero, profound ignorance of human nature, imperfect acquaintance with his subject, and a pedantic style, constitute the excellence of memoir-writing, Lord Herbert is an author of the first class.

Though he had been raised to the peerage by the Stuarts, yet in the days of Charles I. we find him on the side of the parliament. Montgomery-castle was demolished by the King's troops, and the parliament made him a pecuniary compensation. He removed to London, died in 1648, and was buried in St. Giles's.

Such was Lord Herbert of Cherbury. His life may be placed in opposition to, rather than in harmony with, the heroes of early chivalric times. He had their courage, it is true, but he had none of their dignity and nobleness, none of their manly grace; and there was a fantastic trifling in his conduct, which their elevated natures would have scorned. He was no Christian knight: the superstition of the Chandos's and Manny's, gross as it was, is not so offensive to the moral sense as the craft and subtlety of Lord Cherbury's intellect, which refined Christianity into deism. We can admire the heroes of the days of Edward III., placing their swords' points on the Gospels, and vowing to defend the truth to the utterance; but how absurd was the fanaticism, and contemptible vanity, of him who expected that Heaven would declare its will that he should deliver to the world the vain chimeras of his imagination!

The history of English chivalry is now fast drawing to a close. We may mark the state of the system of chivalric education in the castles of the nobility. Every great lord, as his ancestors had been, was still attended by several of the inferior nobility and gentry, and such service was not accounted dishonourable. The boys were, as of old, called pages, though perhaps the age for this title somewhat stepped beyond the ancient limit.

But this was not the only change in that class of the chivalry of England. In former days pages had been the attendants of the great in the amusements of the chase and the baronial hall; and had sometimes shared, with the squire, the more perilous duties of the battle-plain. In the course of time, as the frame of society became more settled, the arts of peace smoothed the stern fierceness of chivalry, and the page was the honorary servant of the lord or his lady, in the proud ceremonial of nobility, and never mixed in war. He continued to be a person of gentle birth, and his dress was splendid; circumstances extremely favourable to that singular state of manners which permitted a woman, without any loss of her good name, to follow him she admired in the disguise of a gentle page, and gradually to win his affections by the deep devotion of her love. Poetry may have adorned such instances of passion, for the subject is full of interest and

Digitized by Google

pathos; but the poets in the best days of English verse so frequently copied from the world around them, that we cannot but believe they drew also in this instance from nature. This form of manners was romantic; but it certainly was not chivalric: for in pure days of chivalry the knights, and not the damsels, were the wooers. — But every thing was changed or degraded.

The general state of the page in the last days of chivalry may be collected from one of the dramas of Ben Jonson, where Lovel, a complete gentleman, a soldier, and a scholar, is desirous to take as his page the son of Lord Frampul, who was disguised as the host of the Light Heart Inn at Barnet:

"*Lov.* A fine child!
You will not part with him, mine host?
"*Host.* Who told you
I would not.
"*Lov.* I but ask you.
"*Host.* And I answer,
To whom? for what?
"*Lov.* To me, to be my page.
"*Host.* I know no mischief yet the child has done,
To deserve such a destiny.
"*Lov.* Why?
"*Host.* * * * * *
Trust me I had rather
Take a fair halter, wash my hands, and hang him
Myself, make a clean riddance of him, than ——
"*Lov.* What?
"*Host.* Than damn him to that desperate course of life.
"*Lov.* Call you that desperate, which by a line
Of institution, from our ancestors,
Hath been derived down to us, and received
In a succession, for the noblest way
Of breeding up our youth, in letter's arms,
Fair mien, discourses, civil exercise,
And all the blazon of a gentleman?
Where can he learn to vault, to ride, to fence,
To move his body gracefuller, to speak
His language purer, or to tune his mind
Or manners, more to the harmony of nature,
Than in these nurseries of nobility?
"*Host.* Ay that was when the nursery's self was noble,
And only virtue made it, not the market.
That titles were not vented at the drum,
Or common outcry, goodness gave the greatness,
And greatness worship: every house became
An academy of honour, and those parts
We see departed, in the practice now
Quite from the institution."*

Something must be abated from this censure, for the speaker was a disappointed man, and therefore querulous. But whatever might have been the education of the page, the character itself was lost in the political convulsions in the time of Charles I. So many of the old institutions of England were then destroyed, that we need not be surprised that the one should not escape, which had long survived its purpose and occasion. At the restoration of the monarchy the ancient court-ceremonial was revived, and therefore the page was a royal officer; but he is scarcely ever mentioned in the subsequent private history of the country; and his duties at the court were altogether personal, though gentilitial, and had no reference at all to military affairs.

The military features of chivalry had been rudely marred in the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, and by the days of James I. not a lineament remained. The graceful sports of chivalry had been sustained by the bold and vigorous Henry VIII., and romance could not but be pleasing to a maiden queen. With Prince Henry the tournament died. Mightier questions than those which knighthood could resolve were before the world; and there was nothing in the bearing of the friends of Charles I., misnamed Cavaliers, to which the character of chivalric can be applied.

The reign of Charles I. is, however, in one respect, a memorable epoch in the history of English knighthood. By the ancient constitution, as we saw in the last chapter, the King had the power of compelling his vassals to be knighted. In all ages, however, whether of the high power or the decline of chivalry, many persons, considering the duties and charges of the honour, had been wont to commute it by a fine; and this custom had often whetted the avarice of monarchs. Elizabeth was the last of our sovereigns who enriched her

* Act i., scene 1, of the play whose title I shall transcribe: "The New Inn: or, the Light Heart; a comedy. As it was never acted, but most negligently played by some, the King's Servants; and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the King Subjects, 1629. Now at last set at liberty to the Readers, His Majesty's Servants and Subjects, to be judg'd of, 1631."

Digitized by Google

exchequer by receiving these commutations. Charles I. endeavoured to augment his revenue by similar means; but the spirit of the age was hostile to his claim; and certainly, as the military system had changed, it was absurd and unjust that the burden should survive the benefit of the ancient system. The people triumphed, and Charles conceded a prerogative which was only known as a means of public oppression. By a statute passed in the sixteenth year of his reign, (cap. 20,) the right of compelling men to receive knighthood was abolished.

One branch of English chivalry, namely, knighthood as connected with property, knighthood as the external symbol of feudalism, was thus put an end to. But knighthood still continued as an honourable distinction. In this, the most interesting part of the subject, a great change had taken place: but it is impossible to mark the exact time of its occurring. We only know that even in the time of the Lancastrian princes knights could not, of their own free will, add new members to the order of chivalry, and that link of honourable equality, which used to bind all men of gentle birth in one state, was broken. The whole power of creating knights was usurped by the crown. The first step, which apparently led to this usurpation, was made even in the purest age of chivalry, the reign of our Edward III.: for at that time civil merit was rewarded by chivalric distinctions. The judges of the courts of law were dignified with knighthood.*

In the subsequent reigns of the Lancastrian princes, it seems to have been regarded as a well established custom, that men who deserved highly of the commonwealth should be honoured with some title above the state of a simple gentleman. Chivalry, as the great fountain of honour, was again resorted to, and the title of esquire was drawn forth. It was then applied to sheriffs of counties, serjeants-at-law, and other men of station; and afterwards courtesy added it to the names of the eldest sons of peers, of knights, and many others.

* Dugdale, Origines Juridiciales, c. 39. Serjeants at law were not knighted till the reign of Henry VIII., c. 51.

The honour, like the rest of the chivalric honours, was personal, not hereditary; and in strictness could be enjoyed only by virtue of creation, or as a dignity appurtenant to an office. The mode of creation was copied from the investiture of a knight. The person who was to be admitted into the squirehood of the country knelt before his sovereign, who, placing a silver collar of scollop shells mixed with esses round his neck, cried, "Arise, Sir Esquire, and may God make thee a good man."*

This right of conferring chivalric honours upon persons of civil station was exercised by the sovereigns only, and it furnished the pretence of their assuming the right of judging upon what occasions it should be conferred on men whose profession was war. The custom of creating knights in the field of battle by the general in command prevailed in England so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Robert, the second son of Sir Henry Sidney, and brother of the famous Sir Philip, was knighted by Leicester, for his chivalric deportment at the battle of Zutphen. Essex, while commanding in Spain and Ireland, distributed chivalric honours with such profusion, that the Queen, who was always jealous of her power, made his conduct, on this subject, the matter of one of the articles of accusation against him.

Knighthood, when conferred in the field, was ever held as a very honourable distinction. When men, who were undistinguished by valour,† were raised to chivalric rank, they were called Carpet Knights, as we are taught by the old ceremonials; and society always used the expression contemptuously, as we learn from our dramatists, who are as good witnesses for the customs of their times as romancers had been for those of earlier days. "He is knight, dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration," is the character which Sir Toby Belch gives of his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek. In a passage of

* Ferne's Blazon of Gentry, p. 100. See, too, Camden's Brittannia "on the degrees in England," p. 234.

† Thus Lord Bacon says, "There be now for martial encouragement some degrees and orders of chivalry, which nevertheless are conferred promiscuously on soldiers and no soldiers," &c. Essays on the true greatness of Kingdoms.

Digitized by Google

surpassing beauty, Fletcher has described the characters of the chivalric and the carpet knight.

"Oh the brave dames
Of warlike Genoa! They had eyes to see
The inward man, and only from his worth,
Courage, and conquests, the blind archer knew
To head his shafts, or light his quenched torch;
They were proof against him else! No carpet knight
That spent his youth in groves or pleasant bowers,
Or stretching on a couch his lazy limbs,
Sung to his lute such soft and pleasing notes
As Ovid nor Anacreon ever knew,
Could work on them, nor once bewitch'd their sense;
Though he came so perfum'd, as he had robb'd
Sabea or Arabia of their wealth,
And stor'd it in one suit."

The order of knighthood was indeed wretchedly degraded in the days of James I., if we can allow any truth to the remarks of Osborne. "At this time the honour of knighthood, which antiquity reserved sacred, as the cheapest and readiest jewel to present virtue with, was promiscuously laid on any head belonging to the yeomanry (made addle through pride, and a contempt of their ancestors' pedigree,) that had but a court friend, or money to purchase the favour of the meanest, able to bring him into an outward room, when the king, the fountain of honour, came down, and was uninterrupted by other business; in which case it was then usual for him to grant a commission for the chamberlain or some other lord to do it."

The carpet, or ordinary knights, must not be confounded with knights of the Bath, though both classes were knights of peace. Knights of the Bath had always precedence of knights-bachelors, without any regard to dates of creation. The Knights of the Bath were men of rank and station, or distinguished for military qualities. They were created by our sovereigns at their coronation, or on other great occasions, from the time of Henry V., when I last adverted to the subject, to so late a period as the reign of Charles II., who, before he was crowned, created sixty-eight knights of the Bath. When queens were sovereigns, a commission was granted to a nobleman to create knights; and the commission of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Arundel is so rich in thought, and dignified in style, that I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it. After the usual salutations, "To all men," the Queen declares as follows: "Whereas, we, minding to proceed to the solemnity of our coronation in such and like honourable sort as in the coronation of our progenitors hath been accustomed, and as to our estate and dignity appertaineth, have, both for the more adornment of the feast of our said coronation, and for the nobility of blood, good service, and other good qualities, of many our servants and other subjects, resolved to call certain of them to the order of knighthood. We let you wete, that for the special trust and confidence which we have reposed in our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Henry Earl of Arundel, Lord Steward of our household, we have appointed, and by these presents do appoint and authorise him for us, and in our name, and by our authority, not only to do and exercise every thing and things to be done and exercised in our behalf, for the full making of those knights of the Bath, whom we have caused to be specially called for that purpose, but also to make and ordain such and so many other persons knights, within the time of two days next ensuing the date hereof, as by us shall be named, or by himself shall be thought meet, so that he exceed not in the whole the number of thirty," &c.*

The ceremonies of creating those knights furnishes us with such an accurate picture of the manners of our ancestors, that, though I have touched upon the subject before, I shall, without apology, describe its minutest features. When an esquire came to court to receive the order of knighthood, in time of peace, after the custom of England, he was worshipfully received by the officers of the court, the steward, or chamberlain, if they were at the palace, or else by the marshals and ushers. Two esquires, sage, and well nourished

* Fletcher, Fair Maid of the Inn, Act i., scene 1.

* Rymer's Fœdera, vol. xv., p. 497.

Digitized by Google

in courtesy, and expert in deeds of knighthood, were assigned as his teachers and governors. If he arrived in the morning, he was to serve the King with water at dinner, or else to place a dish of the first course upon the table; and this was his farewell to his personal duties of esquire. His governors then led him to his chamber, where he remained alone till the evening, when they sent a barber to him, who prepared his bath. Water was not yet put into it, but the esquire was, who sat, wrapped in white cloths and mantles, while his beard was shaved, and his head rounded. All this being done, the governors went to the King, and said to him, "Most mighty Prince, our Sovereign Lord, it waxeth nigh unto the even, and our master is ready in the bath." The King then commanded his chamberlain to take into the chamber of him who was to be made knight the prowest and wisest knights about the court, in order that they might instruct and counsel the esquire, touching the order of knighthood.

The chamberlain, preceded by minstrels singing and dancing, and accompanied by the chosen cavaliers, went to the door of the esquire's room. When the governors heard the sound of minstrelsy, they stripped their master and left him naked in the bath. The music ceased, and the chamberlain and his knights entered the room. After paying much worship and courtesy to each other, he to whom precedence was allowed advanced to the bath, and, kneeling down, whispered these words in the ear of the esquire: "Right dear brother, may this order bring great honour and worship unto you; and I pray that Almighty God may give you the praise of all knighthood. Lo! this is the order: Be ye strong in the faith of the Holy Church, relieve widows and oppressed maidens, give every one his own, and, above all things, love and dread God. Superior to all other earthly objects, love the King, thy sovereign lord; him and his right defend unto thy power, and put him in worship."

When the esquire was thus advised, the knight-counsellor took in his hand water from the bath, and threw it gently on the shoulder of his young friend. The other knights counselled and bathed him in a similar manner, and then, with the first knight, left the chamber. The governors took the esquire out of the bath, and laid him on a bed "to dry." When the process of drying was finished, he was taken out of bed, and clothed warmly; and there was thrown over him a cope of black russet, with long sleeves, and the hood, like that of a hermit, sewn on the cope. The barber had the bath for his fee, and the operation of shaving was paid for separately, agreeably to the estate of the esquire; and if there was any dispute about the sum, the King's Majesty's judgment was looked to.

A joyous company of knights, with squires dancing and minstrels singing, entered the room, and with light pace end gay deportment led their friend into the chapel. There they were refreshed with wines, spices, and sweetmeats; and the knights-counsellors, being thanked by the esquire for their great labour and worship, departed. The governors, the officers of arms, and the waits, remained in the chapel with the esquire. It was his duty to pass the night in prayer to Almighty God that he might worthily receive the honour, and discharge all the offices of knighthood. A taper of wax was always burning before him.

When the morning dawned a priest entered the chapel, and the more solemn duties of religion were proceeded with. Shriving, matins, the mass, and the communion, were performed, the esquire, during the principal ceremonies of the sacrament, holding the taper in his hand, with a penny stuck in the wax, near the light; and, finally, he offered them to the priest, the taper to the honour of God, and the penny to the honour of him that should make him a knight. His governors then took him from the chapel, and laid him in his bed, divesting him of his hermit's weeds.

After some time for refreshment had been allowed him, the governors went to the King, and said, "Most victorious Prince, our master shall awake when it so pleaseth your majesty." The King accordingly commanded the party of knights, esquires, and minstrels, to go into the chamber of the esquire, and

Digitized by Google

awake him. They went, and said to him, "Sir, good day: it is time to arise." The governors raised him in his bed; the most worthy and the most sage knight presented him his shirt, the next cavalier in consideration gave him his breeches, the third his doublet, the fourth his robe of red taffeta, lined with white sarcenet; and, when he was thus partially clothed, two others lifted him out of bed. Two donned his hose, which were of black silk, or of black cloth, with soles of leather, two others buttoned his sleeves, another bound round him a girdle of plain white leather, an inch broad. The combing of the head, and putting on the coif, were each performed by a knight. Another gentle cavalier also gave him his mantle of red tartayn, crossed with white on the breast, and fastened with a lace of white silk, from which depended a pair of white gloves. How his white-feathered white hat got upon his head I know not; for the grave ceremonial is altogether silent about the matter.

The dressing being concluded, the esquire was placed on horseback, and led by the knights into the hall of the King, preceded by a young gentle esquire, also on horseback, and carrying by its point a sword, in a white scabbard, with gilt spurs hanging upon the cross-hilt. The Marshal of England assisted the candidate for knighthood to alight, and led him into the hall, where he sat at the head of the second table, surrounded by his counselling knights, his sword-bearer, and governors. The King, on entering the hall, demanded the sword and spurs, and they were given to him by the chamberlain. The King gave the right spur to one of the noblest peers about him, commanding that lord to place it on the right heel of the esquire. The lord knelt on one knee, and, taking the esquire by the right leg, put the foot upon his knee, and not only affixed the spur to the heel, but made a cross upon the knee of the esquire and kissed it. Another lord attached the left spur to the left foot with similar ceremonies. The King then, out of the meekness of his high might, girt the sword round the esquire. The esquire raised his arms, and the King, throwing his arms round the neck of the esquire, smote the esquire on the shoulder with his right hand, kissing him at the same time, and saying, "Be ye a good knight."

The new-made knight was then conducted by his counselling knights into the chapel, upon whose high altar he laid his sword, offering it to God and Holy Church, most devoutly beseeching Heaven, that he might always worthily demean himself in the order. He then took a sup of wine and left the chapel, at whose door his spurs were taken off by the master-cook, who received them for his fee; and in the fine style of old English bluntness reminded him, that "if he ever acted unworthily of his knighthood, it would be his duty, with the knife with which he dressed the meats, to strike away his spurs, and that thus by the customs of chivalry he would lose his worship." The new-made knight went into the hall, and sat at table with his compeers; but it did not deport with his modesty to eat in their presence, and his abashment kept him from turning his eyes hither and thither. He left the table after the King arose, and went to his chamber with a great multitude of knights, squires, and minstrels, rejoicing, singing, and dancing.

Alone in his chamber, and the door closed, the knight, wearied by this time with ceremony and fasting, ate and drank merrily. He then doffed much of his array, which was distributed among the officers of the household, and put on a robe of blue with the white lace of silk hanging on the shoulder, similar to that which was worn in the days of Henry V.; for however degenerated the world might have become, they could not for shame's sake despise all the forms of chivalry. The ceremony of inauguration concluded by expressions of thanks and courtesy. The knight went to the King, and kneeling before him, said, "Most dread and most mighty Prince, I gratefully salute you for the worship which you have so courteously given to me." The governors thus addressed the knight: "Worshipful Sir, by the King's command we have served you, and that command fulfilled to our power; and what we have done in our service against your reverence we pray you of your grace to pardon us. Furthermore, by

Digitized by Google

the custom of the King's court, we require of you robes and fees becoming the rank of King's squires who are fellows to the knights of other lands."*

CHAPTER XII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN FRANCE.

Chivalry in Baronial Castles.—Chivalry injured by Religious Wars.—Beneficial Influence of Poetry and Romance.—Chivalric Brilliancy of the Fourteenth Century.—Brittany.—Du Guesclin.—Romantic Character of his early years.—His knightly conduct at Rennes.—Gallantry at Cochetel.—Political Consequences of his Chivalry.—He leads an Army into Spain—And Changes the Fortunes of that Kingdom.—Battle of Navaret.—Du Guesclin Prisoner—Treatment of him by the Black Prince—Ransomed—Is made Constable of France.—Recovers the Power of the French Monarchy.—Companionship in Arms between Du Guesclin and Olivier De Clisson.—Du Guesclin's Death before Randon—His Character.—Decline of Chivalry—Proof of it.—Little Chivalry in the Second Series of French and English Wars.—Combats of Pages.—Further Decay of Chivalry.—Abuses in conferring Knighthood.—Burgundy—Its Chivalry.—The Romantic Nature of the Burgundian Tournaments.—Last Gleams of Chivalry in France—Life of Bayard.—Francis I.—Extinction of Chivalry.

The high rank of France among the civilised states of Europe in the middle ages decides the country to which our attention should be next directed in tracing the history of chivalry. Every French baron graced his nobility by the honour of knighthood, and was surrounded by a band of cavaliers. Kings, and even queens, had a certain number of knights who composed their court and accepted their pay; and the conferring of royal honours upon other men than possessors of mere wealth or rank had a powerful effect in promoting the virtues, whatever they might be, of the times. Merit was not considered, as a landed estate, to be altogether hereditary, and the personal nature of chivalry became a check upon the exclusiveness of aristocratical pride.*

The moral influence of the chivalric code in supporting justice and diffusing gentleness of manners is not very perceptible in the early ages of France; for the chroniclers of those times chiefly mark the general political circumstances of the decline of the house of Charlemagne, the establishing of a feudal aristocracy, and the rise of a new monarchy by the spirit and ambition of Hugh Capet.

In the eleventh century chivalry became a distinguishing feature in the national character of France, for the crusades began at that time; and France, above all other countries of the west, was influenced by their spirit. As every knight vowed to support the church, he readily enough became a soldier in those wars which the clergy declared were essential to the well-being of religion. The Holy Land presented a noble field for the display of his virtue: his love of adventures might be gratified by his long and toilsome journey thither; and if the shores of Palestine drank his blood, he gained a crown of martyrdom instead of a victor's laurel.

The sword of the cavalier was too often drawn by the church; and in the persecution of the Albigenses the knighthood of France forgot all the generous liberality and mercy of their order. But although the crusades against ferocious Turks and erring Christians took from chivalry much of its gracefulness and beauty, yet a restoring power was found in that love for poetry and romance which for some ages had been spreading itself over the world. Human nature, in Europe, appears to have been sunk to the lowest possible degree of depression at the time when the Roman empire was in its last days of decay. We corrupt our admiration of classical ages into a superstitious idolatry, when we affirm that the revival of the energies of the human intellect took place in consequence of the discovery of a few Greek and Latin manuscripts. The storm from the north in earlier times was the greatest moral blessing which mankind had ever known. It swept

* British Museum, Cottonian MSS. Nero, c. ix., folio 168. The assumption of dignity by the squire-governors, in order to get greater largesses, is amusing enough: but no knights of other lands were present to chastise them for their insolence.

* Du Cange, Gloss. ad Script. Med. Œvi. in verb. Milites Regis.

Digitized by Google

away those institutions which were no longer sustained by virtue and genius; and the settlement of the Gothic kingdoms was the commencement of the new glories of the world. The successors of the Romans were not entirely occupied in the fierce struggles of ambition. A new intellect was impressed upon Europe, wild as nature before it is tamed into artificial society, but rich, vigorous, and beautiful. As the new states of the west took a firm and enduring shape, as the tendency of human nature to improvement gradually became visible, intellectual talent was more and more esteemed. If in the twelfth century the plains of Europe were covered with armed knights, the castles were filled with poets who sang the joys both of war and love; and although the brave guests of Charlemagne and his paladins against the Saracens were the theme of many a minstrel's lay, and tended to promote religious wars, yet the same romantic rhymers described the other duties of the chivalric character, and set knightly gentleness and gallantry at the highest pitch of chivalric virtue. That from their own viciousness, or in base compliance with their lords' passions, they were often gross in their descriptions and depraved in their morality, are circumstances sufficiently true; but still the general tendency of the poetry and romance of the chivalric ages was to improve the manners of the time. To right the oppressed, to succour woman in distress, formed the burden of many an ancient song; and when chanted to the minstrel's harp in a baronial hall, it won the mind of the feudal noble from those deeds of blood which the superstitious declared were the only duties of a knight.

The amusements of chivalry aided romance in seeking o'er the rugged looks of war; for tournaments became more and more the national amusement as the world escaped from the darkness of barbarism. The crusades closed with the thirteenth century; and in the succeeding age that fine spirit of chivalry, which the expeditions to Palestine had checked, shone with unclouded brilliancy. When the plains of France were one vast tilting ground for the French and English knights, stern fanaticism did not draw the sword. In the crusades, romantic aspirations after woman's smiles seldom inspired the hero's chivalry, but in the wars of Edward III. in France, every cavalier fought for the honour of his lady-mistress as well as for the ambition of his King. In those days that great principle of chivalry, the companionship of knights, was fully felt as an influential motive to action. Therefore the cavalier was courteous to his foe; he waited the leisure, and saluted the other, before he placed his spear in its rest: he did not demand of his captive a ransom more heavy than his estate could well furnish; and in no case did he inflict cruelties beyond the necessary pains of war. The display of chivalry was as brilliant as its spirit was noble; and it was a great beauty to behold banners and standards waving in the wind, horses barded, and knights and squires richly armed. But as I collected in a former chapter the most striking circumstances regarding the chivalry of those times, I shall pass on to the next interesting page in knightly story.

It contains the life of a hero, whose chivalric courage materially influenced the fortunes of the French monarchy. He sprung, too, from a country that was full of romantic associations. When the Saxons had achieved the conquest of England, many of the subjugated people crossed the sea to France, and settled in Brittany: so numerous, indeed, was the colony, that the historians of that province people it entirely from England.* The ancient language on this island was certainly spoken in Armorica; and all our history and romance were known and cherished there as well and as fondly as in Wales and Cornwall, the other receptacles of oppressed Britons. In after ages both the French and English chevaliers turned their eyes to Brittany with respect and veneration, as the preserver of the fame of Arthur, and of the knights of the Round Table,

* Du Chesne, Hist. Franc. Script. vol. ii., p. 148. The assertion, however, is not strictly correct; for so early as the fourth century Armorica had been colonised from Wales. Argentré, Hist. de la Bretagne, p. 2. A connexion ever since subsisted between Armorica and this island; and when the Britons were oppressed, they repaired to the Continent for refuge.

Digitized by Google

whose history was a chief source of romantic fiction.

And now, in the fourteenth century, a cavalier appeared who was worthy to have broken a lance with

"Uthers's son,
"Begirt with British and Armorick knights!"

Bertrand du Guesclin, a Breton, of gentle rather than noble family, was a knight in whom the love of military glory burnt with a pure and bright flame. He was born at the chateau of De la Motte de Broen, near Rennes, in Brittany, in the year 1320. Nature had so little graced his personal exterior, that even to the partial eye of a mother he seemed rather a clown than a gentleman. Some tinge of melancholy in his nature was mistaken for ill-tempered gloom, and his disposition to taciturnity was fostered by neglect and contempt. He grew rude, violent, and morose; and his parents would not entertain the notion of educating him for a knighthood, the wonted distinction of the eldest son of a gentleman. But the disposition of Bertrand's mind was invincible; and he encouraged it by practising with energy and perseverance all the boyish exercises which were the faithful mirrors of war; he practised them, too, in opposition to the will of his father, who never failed to chastise him when he witnessed any display of his nature's bent. He appeared as an unknown knight at a tournament at Rennes, and won the palm of victory from a regularly educated cavalier. The path of military glory now lay before him. Soon afterwards he entered the service of Charles of Blois, who knighted him; and he speedily distinguished himself by several chivalric circumstances.

The town of Rennes was blockaded by the Duke of Lancaster with such ability, that a surrender at discretion was looked for by the English. In full confidence of success, Lancaster vowed that he would not quit the place until he was its master. In this embarrassing conjuncture, one of the citizens offered to pass through the camp of the enemy, to deceive the Duke by false intelligence, and, finally, to apprise Charles of Blois of the danger which hung over the place. With great skill and firmness he performed his promise. He repaired to the camp of the Duke, and painted with affected *naïvete* the distress of the besieged, who founded, he said, their only hope of safety on the succour of a French troop that was expected in two days. The tale was credited; and while the Duke, hastily collecting his choicest knights, rode at speed to meet the rescue, the townsman of Rennes, from his simple unwarlike appearance, was allowed at his free will to pass through the camp. At some distance from the English station he encountered Bertrand du Guesclin, and described the position of affairs. In a moment, the valiant Briton knight formed and executed his resolve: he waved his pennon, and many hardy soldiers pressed around him. They dashed into the English camp; and, after displaying the power of their chivalry, they seized large stores of provisions, and proudly marched with them into the famished town of Rennes.

Soon afterwards, the wearied and mortified English returned to their camp. Surprised at the destruction which had been committed in his absence, the Duke inquired the cause; and was told that the name of the knight who had executed so bold a measure was Du Guesclin. Lancaster, like a gallant cavalier, could admire boldness even in a foeman, and he sent a herald into the town, requesting that he might behold the man who had so singularly distinguished himself.

Accordingly on the next morning, Du Guesclin went to the enemy's camp, his personal safety being secure under the word of English chivalry. He was conducted into the tent of the Duke, who received him with perfect courtesy, which the knight answered by assuring him that he was at his command in all things that did not militate against the service of his own chief.

The Duke then demanded the name of his lord, and Du Guesclin replied, Charles of Blois, to whom by right appertained the duchy of Brittany.

An English knight observed, "*Messire Bertrand, avant que ce vous dites se termine arrive, il en couterâ cent mille têtes.*"

"*Eh bien,*" answered Du Guesclin,

Digitized by Google

"*qu'on en tue tant qu'on voudra, ceux qui demeureront auront la robe des autres.*"

This repartee amused the Duke, who, pleased at the martial frankness of Du Guesclin, wished to engage him in his service. But he declined all his offers; and after jousting with a knight who thought little of his valiancy, he returned to Rennes.

The winter approached; a season more terrible to those without than to those within the walls. Du Guesclin repulsed every assault; and Lancaster would have retired, if his honour had not been pledged to take the town. Du Guesclin's ingenuity assisted him in this exigency. It was agreed that Lancaster should enter Rennes armed, his standards should be planted on the walls, and after this satisfaction of his conscience he should raise the siege. The treaty was faithfully executed. The Duke entered Rennes, remained there some hours, and then quitted it; hardly, however, had he left the gate, when the citizens contemptuously cast his standards into the ditch. This indignity wounded him deeply; but being an honourable observer of his word, he would not betray his resentment, or permit his army to avenge this insult to their leader and their nation.*

Du Guesclin soon afterwards entered the service of John, king of France, with a considerable band of Breton knights and squires, whom the fame of his chivalry had drawn to his standard. He remained a royal knight till the death of the king in 1364, and then became a soldier of his successor Charles V. Before the coronation of that monarch, Du Guesclin proved himself worthy of being his cavalier, by a circumstance which entitled him also to national gratitude. The authority of the French, in Normandy, was disputed by some lords of that duchy, who were aided by the English and the Navarrese. The troops of Navarre encountered the French near Cochetel; but instead of maintaining their position on a hill, they descended into the plain, deceived by a feigned retreat of Du Guesclin. Then it was that the Breton ranged his men-at-arms; and their inequality in number to the foe was more than supplied by the reflection with which Du Guesclin animated them, that it behoved the chivalry of France to ornament with laurel the crown of their new sovereign.

Only one circumstance of the battle merits description; and, indeed, it is the only intelligible one in the mêlée of the knights. Thirty Gascon gentlemen had united themselves in strict fraternity of enterprise and peril to take prisoner John de Grailly, the commander of the Navarrese. Accordingly, when the fight began, they advanced with serried shields into the thickest of the press. They were beaten back; but they soon renewed the charge, and their prowess at length prevailed: for the Navarrese knights had not formed themselves into a band for the defence of their commander, and his person was therefore imperfectly protected. His capture decided the fate of the day. The battle of Cochetel is remarkable, not only as gracing a new king but as animating the courage of the French which had been dispirited by repeated defeats during the two preceding reigns.*

In the same year Du Guesclin, by permission of his sovereign, aided his former friend, Charles de Blois, in establishing his rights over Brittany. The opponent of Charles was John de Mountfort, and a destructive war had been seemingly closed by the peace of Landes. But the Countess of Penthievre, the wife of Charles, disdained any compromise of her rights, and her tears and reproaches induced him to cancel the treaty. The war was renewed; the English siding with de Mountfort, and the French with Charles. The battle of Auray decided the cause. Charles of Blois was slain; and in his last moments he lamented that his ambition had been fatal to so many brave men. Du Guesclin was made prisoner by a squire of Sir John Chandos, the commander of De Mountfort's troops;† but he scarcely felt the pain of imprisonment, so courteously did the English knight deport himself.

Such was the state of Du Guesclin when Europe once again became a scene

* Velly, Hist. de la France, vol. v., p. 132—136.

* Velly, Hist. de la France, vol. v., p. 313, &c.

† D'Argentré, Histoire de Bretagne, livre vii., c. 15, Paris, 1618.

Digitized by Google

of chivalry; and its fortunes was as much influenced by his gallant spirit, as, a few years before, they had been swayed by those knights who had assailed and defended the French crown. The peace of Bretigny had terminated the contest between France and England, and the interesting point of political consideration was Spain. A long course of oppression and tyranny had alienated from Peter, King of Castile, the affections of his people, and stigmatised his name with the epithet, Cruel. His murdering his nobility and his brothers would have passed unnoticed out of Spain; but he imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, and she was sister of the French queen. The indignation of Charles V. of France was roused at this last crime; and the chivalric gallantry of his court loudly echoed his feelings. An army and a leader both were wanting; for most of the knighthood of France had been slain in the late wars. At that moment Du Guesclin was regarded by the court of France as the great stay of knighthood; and his love of military adventures, and his aspirations for high emprises, seconded the wish of the King, that he would revenge the death of his sister. These military qualifications of chivalry formed the character of Du Guesclin; for he who had been rudely stamped by nature, who little regarded lovers' lays and ladies' bowers, could scarcely sympathise with the gallantry of the court of France. But for the heroism of Du Guesclin the enterprise would have perished in its bud. France was covered with soldiers, the disbanded mercenaries of the late wars. Charles V. regarded them with suspicious eyes; his power was not adequate to annihilate them, or even to punish them for the violation of his subjects' peace; and, skilful prince as he was, he made no attempt to remove them peaceably from his states. It was only to a real genius in war that they would submit; and Du Guesclin, above all other men of his age, was capable of guiding their martial energies. The king ransomed him from Chandos for one hundred thousand franks,* and invested him with the command of the enterprise. Du Guesclin met the mercenaries at the table of carousal, and the occasion of festivity was a favourable one for communicating his scheme. I cannot believe, with some writers, that the unchivalric conduct of Peter stimulated the heroism of these adventurers. Among, them, indeed, were many soldiers of fortune, generous and noble minded; and such men would sympathise with virtue; but most of them were mere military ruffians, who defied, and were the disgrace of, the law. The promise of two hundred thousand livres from the king of France was the lure for their enterprising themselves, and I need not dwell upon their hope of common military plunder. It is amusing to observe how fondly superstition clings about the heart of man; for these daring marauders declared that they could not cross the Alps till they had received absolution from the Pope for their former sins. Du Guesclin promised to procure it; and then the joyousness of the soldier resumed its ascendency, and they cried, that they had more confidence in him than in all the bishops of France or at Avignon.

Towards that city of Italian prelates they repaired, after having been admitted into the presence of the French king. They astonished the legate of the terrified Pope by declaring that they wanted absolution and two hundred thousand livres. With these opposite demands his holiness prudently complied; and Du Guesclin crossed the Pyrenees, his soldiers being now called the White Companions, from their wearing on their shoulders a white cross, to testify that they had taken up arms only to abolish Judaism, and put down Peter, who was the supposed supporter of it.* Du Guesclin was accompanied into Spain by many noble Spaniards, whom the cruelties of Peter had, some while before, banished from their own country. Among them was Henry of Trastamarra, the son of Leonora de Guzman, the mistress of Peter's father. The hopes of Castile were now directed to Henry;

* Froissart, c. 230.

* Memoires de Du Guesclin, vol. iv., c. 16. The mode by which the Queen came by her death was never certainly known. One common story was, that she had been murdered by a party of Jews employed by the King, and hence he was considered a patron of Judaism itself.

Digitized by Google

for any defect in the legitimacy of his title was amply supplied by his talents and virtues. Du Guesclin supported the general feeling of the time; he drove the king from the throne, and seated Henry upon it.

The deposed monarch fled to Corunna, embarked, with his three daughters, on board the first ship which the shadow of his former power enabled him to command, and sailed to Bayonne. He knew that the Black Prince was in Bordeaux, and he lay before him his wrongs. Edward, hearing of his purpose, and resolving to do him honour, issued out of the city, accompanied by divers knights and squires, and went and met the king, and did him great reverence, both in word and deed. After the Prince had well feasted him, they rode together to Bordeaux, Edward, like a courteous knight, giving his friend the right, or side of honour. When they reached the city, the king was conducted to a fair chamber, ready apparelled for him; and, after changing his soiled dress for a robe of splendour, he went to the princess and the ladies, who received him right courteously.*

But few entreaties were necessary, before Edward promised the best exertions of his chivalry to restore him to his throne. The rights of legitimacy were his pretext; for he said that "it was not fit a bastard should hold a realm in heritage, and put his brother, the rightful inheritor of the land, out of his own realm; the which things all kings and kings' sons should in no wise suffer, nor consent to, for it was a great prejudice against the state royal." The Prince, as Froissart says, was then in the lusty flower of his youth; and he was never weary nor well satisfied with war, since the first beginning that he bore arms, but ever intended to achieve high deeds of chivalry.* "The people of Spain," observes Froissart in another place, "had great marvel of the Prince's intention, and there was much communing thereof. Some said the Prince took on him the enterprise for pride and presumption, and was, in a manner, angry of the honour that Sir Bertrand of Du Guesclin had gotten, in conquering of the realm of Castile, in the name of King Henry, who was by him made king."† And if the principles of human nature and chivalry should still leave any doubt on our minds regarding Edward's motives, his treatment of Du Guesclin, when the noble Breton became his prisoner, would remove any obscurity.

His council in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, though these good and sage imaginative lords pleaded well the cause of justice. "Sir," they said, "ye have heard it observed, divers times, he that embraceth too much holdeth the weaklier. It is for a truth that ye are one of the Princes of the world most praised, honoured, and redoubted, and hold on this side of the sea

* This is Froissart's story, c. 231, and far more natural than the account in the Memoires de Du Guesclin (which Mr. Turner has placed in the text of his History of England). The memoir-writer gives a long melo-dramatic story of Peter's application to the Prince — of his tears and sobs, and other expressions of grief. The tale goes on to relate, that when the Prince was won to espouse his cause, his Princess, who was at her toilette, was much displeased, that he should have been imposed upon by a man so criminal as the Spanish King. Edward, fancying his martial prerogative infringed, exclaimed, "I see that she wants me to be always at her side. But a prince who wishes to immortalize his name, must *seek* occasions to signalise himself in war, and must by his victories obtain reward among posterity. By St. George, I *will* restore Spain to its right inheritor." Mr. Turner says, "That although this account is given by an enemy, yet as the circumstances correspond with the known character of Edward, they seem entitled to our belief." History of England, vol. ii., p. 178. Now, for my part, I do not believe one word of the pretty stories of the tears and the toilette. The Memoirs of Du Guesclin are a good authority for the life of their hero; but Froissart is the historian of the other side of the question, and the hero of his tale (if sometimes he loses historic dignity in the partiality of biography) is Edward. Froissart was acquainted with every circumstance that happened in the English army, and his account of the matter is far more rational than that of Du Guesclin's historian. It is expressive of the character of Edward and his times. Here we see the gentle knight yielding the place of honour to his friend, and the lady of the knight treating the guests sweetly and graciously. The toilette-scene is altogether omitted; and even if it had been inserted in the chronicle, I should reject it as false: for it was not characteristic of Edward's noble mindedness to speak to his Princess with petulance and ill humour.

* Froissart, liv. i., c. 231, 232.

† Ibid., c. 232.

Digitized by Google

great lands and seigniories, thanked be God, in good rest and peace. There is no king, near nor far, who at this time dares to displease you; so renowned are you of good chivalry, grace, and good fortune. You ought, therefore, by reason, to be content with what you have, and seek not to get any enemies. Sir, we say not this for evil. We know well that the King, Don Peter of Castile, who is now driven out of his realm, is a man of high mind, right cruel, and full of evil conditions; for by him have been done many evil deeds in the realm of Castile; and he hath caused many a valiant man to lose his head, and brought cruelty to an end, without any manner of reason; and so by his villain deeds he is now put out of his realm: and also, besides all this, he is enemy to the church, and cursed by our holy father, the Pope. He is reputed, and hath been a great season, a tyrant; and, without tittle of reason, hath always grieved and made war with his neighbours, the King of Arragon and the King of Navarre, and would have disinherited them by puissance; and also, as the bruit runneth throughout his realm, how he causeth to die his wife, your cousin, daughter to the Duke of Bourbon. Wherefore, Sir, you ought to think and consider that all this that he now suffers are rods and strokes of God sent to chastise him, and to give example to all other Christian kings and princes, to beware that they do not as he hath done."

Such were the counsels of the Gascon and English knights who attended Edward; but his resolution was formed, and he prepared for war. He drew from the White Companies those of his valiant liegemen, who, for want of other chevisance, had joined Du Guesclin; and, in England, when his purpose was bruited, all the youthful chivalry was on fire to join the hero of Cressy and Poictiers.

He commenced his march with thirty thousand soldiers. It was winter when they passed through the valley of Roncesvalles; and, while the snow drove in their faces, they cheered their spirits by singing the songs in which the minstrel-muse had celebrated the deeds of Charlemagne's paladins. At Pampeluna their distressful march was relieved by the King of Navarre, whose aid they had purchased; and the Prince of Wales proceeded to Castile. The battle of Navaret decided the contest. The common people of Spain, who composed the first ranks of Henry, fought so bravely with their slings, that the Englishmen were sorely troubled; but Edward's archers drew their bows right yeomanly, and soon checked their fury. Henry had on his side more than a hundred thousand men in harness, from Castile, Portugal, and other states; and well and chivalrously did they sustain his cause. The better-appointed force of Edward gradually prevailed, though King Henry's troops fought to the bravest point; for, as they had placed him on the throne, they felt their honour engaged to fight for him to the uttermost. The battle, in all its press and din, was fought between the troops of Du Guesclin and those of Sir John Chandos. The noble Breton was taken prisoner, and the English remained masters of the field. Don Pedro was restored to his throne, and Edward somewhat redeemed his previous conduct, by inducing the King to grant a general pardon and amnesty. The ingratitude of Pedro was the consequence of the Black Prince's exertions in his favour; and I need not dwell upon such a natural circumstance.*

To furnish his troops with those arrears of pay which Peter should have satisfied, Edward was obliged to tax the possessions of the English in France. Between the people of England and the French there had been long-enduring jealousies: there was no community of ideas and manners between them; and the principle of obedience more naturally rested on a French than on an English sovereign. The demeanour of the Black Prince was not that of a courteous and gentle knight: his haughtiness lost him many friends; and his impolicy of giving all the offices of state in Gascony and Aquitain to Englishmen was bitterly complained of, and resented by the lords

* The Memoirs of Du Guesclin and Froissart, and a few passages in Mariana, have furnished this account of the Spanish war. In the general outline I have been anticipated by the popular historians of England; but I have introduced a great many circumstances essential to my subject, and which did not come within the scope of their design.

Digitized by Google

of those countries, who had perilled themselves, to the loss of their estates, in his cause.

On the other hand, the English were not backward in reproaching the Gascons. Certain knights of England once told the Black Prince, that he little knew the mind of these people, nor how proud they were. "They do not love us, and never did," continued these counsellors. "Sir, remember ye not how highly and greatly they bore themselves against you in the city of Bourdeaux, when King John of France was first carried thither? They said then, and maintained plainly, that by them only ye attained to achieve the taking of the King; and that right well appeared, for you were in great treaty with them for the space of four months, ere they would consent that the French king should be carried into England. First, it behoved you to satisfy their minds to keep them in love."* Edward's attempt at taxation exasperated the angry feelings of his subjects, and was the great and immediate cause of their revolt to the French King.

Edward detained Du Guesclin in prison longer than was consistent with the feelings of generosity, which were wont to warm the breast of a gentle knight. Yet Edward could state the reciprocal duties of conqueror and captive with accuracy; that the former ought not to exact too high a sum, and that the latter should not attempt to escape without paying his ransom. A cavalier, using the freedom of a festive hour, commented on this observation, by saying, that the world was blaming him for his severity towards one of his prisoners. Edward's sense of honour was touched by this remark, and he summoned Du Guesclin to his presence. The hero appeared before him, dressed in his coarse prison garment; and in reply to some unknightly merriment of the Prince, on the rudeness of his appearance, he said, that it remained with the pleasure of the conqueror when he should be better clothed; that for some time he had only rats and mice for his companions, and, as he added with affecting simplicity, "even to the songs of the birds I have been a stranger."

Edward offered him freedom on condition of his swearing not to war in favour of France or of Henry of Trastamarra, the candidate for the Spanish throne. Du Guesclin could not consistently with honour comply with these conditions; and Edward, stung by the recollection that the world had impeached his bravery and generousness, declared that, to show he dreaded no man, Du Guesclin should be restored to his liberty on paying a proper ransom. The noble Breton then required to be released on his parole, in order that he might fetch the necessary sum. Edward, touched by his spirited demeanour, resumed all his generous and chivalric feelings, and declared that Du Guesclin should name his own ransom; and instead of fixing it at ten thousand or twenty thousand livres, the captive hero proudly mentioned sixty thousand florins. The Prince was astonished at his apparent presumption, and asked him by what means he could pay so large a sum. "The Kings of France and Castile," he replied, "are my friends, and will never fail me in a case of necessity. I know a hundred knights of Brittany who would sell their possessions for my liberation; and there is not a woman sitting at her distaff in France who would not labour with her own hands to redeem me from yours." Du Guesclin was then liberated on his parole of honour, and people gazed with curiosity and respect upon a man who had so noble a sense of his own dignity.*

This liberation took place in the year 1368, and the Breton immediately entered into the service of Henry of Trastamarra. Peter had renewed his cruelties when the Black Prince seated him on the throne, and his tyranny again provoked the Castillians to rebellion. The power of Henry slowly rose, and as soon as Du Guesclin and his Gascons took the field, he once more became king. Soon afterwards our knight was recalled by Charles V. to France, and placed at the head of his chivalry by the title of Constable. He entered Paris amidst general acclamations, the people saluting him with cries which hitherto had been appropriated to kings. He went to court, where the King, in the presence of his nobles, declared, that he chose him to

* Froissart, book i., c. 233.

* Memoires de Du Guesclin, p. 255, &c.

Digitized by Google

command his armies, and therefore gave him the sword of Constable. Du Guesclin then, with the modesty of a true knight, implored his sovereign to honour with this dignity some one who was more worthy of it than himself. But Charles declared that there was not a knight in France who did not acknowledge the superior worship of Du Guesclin, and therefore he commanded him to accept the office. Du Guesclin yielded; but fearing the courtiers of Paris more than his country's enemies, he entreated the King not to credit any tales which might be circulated to his prejudice, without first hearing his defence.*

Du Guesclin now began to achieve the high emprise of reannexing to the crown of France those provinces which the gallantry of the Black Prince had wrested from it. Charles could not give him many troops, but the noble knight sold his estates in order to raise men-at-arms, and his wife parted with the ornaments becoming her station, in order to purchase lances and harness. He was soon surrounded by four thousand soldiers. They were chiefly levied in Normandy, and their rendezvous was Caen. Du Guesclin threw an air of chivalry over his emprise, for he introduced the usage of fraternity of arms. He chose for his own brother, Olivier De Clisson, or Du Guesclin, a knight whose name is mentioned with honour in all the great battles of the time. These two Breton cavaliers signed at Pontoison the act of their fraternity, whereby they engaged to defend the estate, life, and honour of each other.†

Du Guesclin then fell upon the English at Pontvelain with the force of thunder: most of them were taken prisoners; and Sir Robert Knowles, their leader,

* D'Argentré, Historie de Bretagne, liv. vii., c. 15.

† Labineau, Hist. De Bretagne, vol. ii., p. 538. The treaty itself is so curious, that a life of Du Guesclin would be imperfect without it. "A tous ceux que ces lettres verront, Bertrand du Guesclin, Duc de Mouline, Connestable de France, et Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson, salut. Sçavoir faisons que pour nourrir bonne paix et amour perpetuellement entre nous et nos hoirs, nous avons promises, jurées et accordées entre nous les choses qui s'ensuivint. C'est à savoir que nous Bertrand du Guesclin voulons estre alliez, et nous allions à tourjours à vous Messire Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson contre tous ceulx qui pevent vivre et mourir, exceptez le Roy de France, ses freres, le Vicomte de Rohan, et nos autres seigneurs de qui nous tenons terre: et vous promettons aidier et conforter de tout nostre pouvoir toutesfois que mestier en aurez, et vous nous en requerrez. Item, que ou cas que nul autre seigneur de quelque estat ou condition qu'il soit, à qui vous seriez tenu de foy et hommage, excepté le Roy de France, vous voudroit desheriter par puissance, et vous faire guerre en corps, en honneur, et en biens, nous vous promettons aidier, defendre, et secourir de tout nostre pooir, se vous nous en requerrez. Item, voulons et consentons que de tout et quelconques proufitz et droitz, qui nous pourront venir, et echoir dorenavant, tant de prisonniers pris de guerre par nous ou nos gens, dont le proufitz nous pourroit appartenir, comme de pais raençonné vous aiez la moitié entierement. Item, au cas que nous sçaurions aucune chose qui vous peust porter aucune dommage ou blasme, nous vous le ferons sçavoir et vous en accointerons le plutost que nous pourrons. Item, garderons vostre corps à nostre pooir comme nostre frere. Et nous Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson, voulons estre, alliez, et nous allions à toujours à vous Messire Bertrand du Guesclin dessus nommé, contre tous ceulx qui pevent vivre et mourir exceptez le Roy de France, ses freres, le Vicomte de Rohan, et nos autres seigneurs de qui nous tenons terre, et vous promettons aidier, et conforter de tout nostre pooir toutefois que mestier en aurez et vous nous en requerrez. Item, que au cas que nul autre seigneur de quel que estat ou condition qu'il soit, à qui vous seriez tenu de foi, ou hommage, excepté le Roy de France, vous voudroit desheriter par puissance, et vous faire guerre en corps, en honneur ou en biens, nous vous promettons aidier, defendre, et secourir de tout nostre pooir, si vous nous en requerrez. Item, voulons et consentons que de tous ou quelconques proufitz et droitz qui nous pourront venir et echoir dorenavant, tant de prisonniers pris de guerre par nous ou nos gens, dont le proufit nous pourroit appartenir, comme de pais raençonne, vous aiez la moitié entierement. Item, au cas que nous sçaurions aucune chose qui vous peust porter dommage aucun ou blasme, nous vous la ferons sçavoir, et vous en accointerons le plutost que nous pourrons. Item, garderons vostre corps à nostre pooir comme nostre frere. Toutes lesquelles choses dessusdites, et chacune d'icelles, nous Bertrand et Olivier dessus nomée avons promises, accordées, et jurées, promettons accordons et jurons sur les saintz evangiles de Dieu corporellement touchiez par nous, et chascun de nous, et par les foys et sermens de nos corps bailliez l'un à l'autre tenir, garder, enteriner et accomplir l'un à l'autre, sans faire, ne venir en contre par nous, ne les nostres, ou de l'un de nous, et les tenir fermes et agreables à tous jours. En temoing desquelles choses nous avons fait mettre nos seaulz à ces presentes lettres, lesquelles nous avons fait doubler. Donné à Pontoison, le 24 jour d'Octobre l'an de grace mille trois cens soixante et dix.

Digitized by Google

fled to Brittany, and concealed his head for shame, during the rest of his life in the castle of Derval.* The Black Prince was then at Bourdeaux, enfeebled by sickness: he had wasted his constitution in the peninsular war; for the climate of Spain was not so favourable to the health of Englishmen in those days as it has been found in later times. Instead of being able to gird on his armour and display his chivalry, Edward had scarcely strength to follow the counsel of his leeches to return to England. He left the Duke of Lancaster to preserve the English dominion in France from total ruin.

The year 1371 was a blank in the chivalric history of Du Guesclin, but the following spring he continued his attempt to subjugate Poictou. Many cities were sacked; and the abhorrence with which the cruelties of Olivier de Clisson were regarded by his own army may warrant the conjecture that inhumanity was not general. At the close of 1372, Poictou was entirely subdued. In the next year, Du Guesclin continued his conquests, and Guienne became the subject of his victories. The Duke of Lancaster was the successor of the power, but not of the chivalry, of the Black Prince; and De Mountfort, whom Edward sent to France as the opponent of Du Guesclin, not only recovered nothing, but lost much of Brittany; and thus by the genius and fortune of one chivalric hero, all the bright visions of glory created in the fervid imaginations of our Edwards were blighted, and France recovered her station among the high powers of Europe.

Du Guesclin continued in the service of Charles. The last years of his life it is impossible to describe, so contradictory are his biographers. Some declare that the calumnies of Parisian courtiers deprived him of the favour of Charles, and that he lost his office of Constable. However this may have been, it is certain that in the year 1380 he commanded the French troops at Auvergne, and went to lay siege to Randan, a little fortress some leagues from Mendes, in the Gevandau, between the sources of the Lot and the Alleir. The place, until then so little known, immediately became famous in French history, for the loss which France sustained before its walls of one of her prowest knights. Du Guesclin, who, according to the wont of chivalry, had vowed not to sheath his sword while an enemy's lance was raised, pressed the siege with vigour, when he was attacked by a malady which was soon found to be mortal. He beheld the approach of death with Christian intrepidity, and he died while exhorting the knights around his bed to the duties of devotion to God, loyalty to the King, and mercy to those who were the objects of war. It was his wish to be buried at Dinan, in Brittany, but the King commanded the abbey of St. Denys to be the place;* and in kindness and gratitude, he was anxious that a lamp should always hang over the tomb, in order that posterity might never lose remembrance of his great deeds.† The

* Argentré, viii., 3, 4.

* Voltaire says, that Bertrand Du Guesclin was the first person over whom a funeral oration was delivered, and who was interred in the church destined for the tombs of the kings of France. He adds, "Son corps fut porté avec les mêmes cérémonies que ceux des souverains; quatre princes du sang le suivaient ses chevaux selon la coutume du temps, furent présentées dans l'église à l'évêque que officiait, et qui les bénit en leur imposant les mains. Les détails sont peu importants; ils font connoitre l'esprit de chevalerie. L'attention que s'attiraient les grands chevaliers célèbres parleurs faits d'armes s'étendait sur les chevaux qui avoient combattre sans eux." Essai sur les Mœurs, c. 78.

† Anselme in his Palais de l'Honneur, gives an amusing account of the chivalric rules for sepulchral monuments. They were better observed in France than in any other country, and even there they were not very scrupulously attended to. "They are," however, as Gough remarks (Sepulchral Antiquities, vol. i., p. cxvii.), "a curious specimen of monumental punctilio. Knights and gentlemen might not be represented by their coats of arms, unless they had lost their lives in some battle, single combat, or rencontre with the prince himself, or in his service, unless they died and were buried within their own manors or lordships; and then to show that they died a natural death in their beds, they were represented with their coat of armour ungirded, without a helmet, bareheaded, their eyes closed, their feet resting against the back of a greyhound, and without any sword. Those who died on the day of battle, or in any mortal rencontre, on the victorious side, were to be represented with a drawn sworn in their right hand, and a shield in their left, their helmet on, which some think ought to be closed, and the visor let down, in token that they fell fighting against their enemies, having their coat of arms girded over their arms, and at their feet a lion. Those who died in prison, or before they had paid their ransom, were

Digitized by Google

epitaph, on account of its simplicity, deserves mention. "Ici gist noble homme Messire Bertrand Du Guesclin, Comte de Longueville, et Connétable de France, qui trepassa au chastel neuf de Randan en Gisaudan, en la Sénéchaussée de Beauncaire, le 13 jour de Juillet, 1380. Priez Dieu pour lui."*

Such was the life of a simple Breton gentleman, who, with no advantage of birth, no powerful patronage, but with only his good sword to speed him, raised himself to the highest rank in the French nation, and his was one of the numerous instances in the middle ages where the personal merit of chivalry was of more avail than the hereditary right of aristocracy. In many of the essentials of knighthood, in lofty daring, sageness, and generosity, he was as preux a chevalier as the English Chandos' and Mannys; but there was none of that gallant grace over this darling of French chivalry, which distinguished the heroes of Edward III. He was so sensible of his own personal plainness that he never cultivated the pleasing amenities of chivalry; but his modesty did not pass unrewarded:† for the ladies of Brittany were so deeply read in the romances of their country, that they loved only men who were famous for martial deeds. Du Guesclin was twice married: of the first of his wives nothing is on record; the other is said to have been a woman of beauty, fortune and wit. She was an heiress in Brittany, and Charles of Blois promoted the union, hoping to attach him to his court. Her reputation as a prophetess was extensive, and her prediction of his success in a particular battle being verified, her vanity became interested in his fate. She had her days of good and of evil fortune, and if historians have written his annals faithfully, Bertrand often repented, both as a soldier and a husband, when he did not regard her counsels.*

The history of France after these circumstances was the struggle between the ruling powers and the people regarding the right of taxation. The civil wars that devastated France and Flanders, in consequence of this dispute, bore none of the character of chivalry; for monarchical and aristocratical haughtiness disdained to consider as their companions in arms those whom they called the rascal-rout, the base-born rabble. It was only wars of ambition that were graced and softened by chivalric generosity; and therefore all was blood, and horror, and confusion, when the houses of Orleans and Burgundy distracted France with their feuds. The pages of Monstrelet, the chronicler of the events to which I have alluded, form a gloomy contrast to the splendid scenes of Froissart. The field, indeed, continues to gleam with lances, and banners and pennons wave in the wind, but the spirit of ho-

represented on the tombs without spurs or helmet, without coats of arms or swords, only the scabbard girded to, and hanging at their sides. Those who fell in the battle or rencontre on the side of the conquered were to be represented without coats of arms, the sword at the side and in the scabbard, the visor raised and open, their hands joined on their breasts, and their feet resting against the back of a dead and overthrown lion. The child of a governor, or commander in chief, if born in a besieged city, or in the army, however young he died, was represented on the tomb, armed at all points, his head on his helmet, and clad in a coat of mail of his size at the time of his death. The military man, who at the close of his life took on him a religious habit and died in it, was represented completely armed, his sword by his side on the lower part; and on the upper the habit of the order he had assumed, and under his feet the shield of his arms. The gentleman who had been conquered and slain in the lists, in a combat of honour, ought to be placed on his tomb, armed at all points, his battle-axe lying by him, his left arm crossed over the right. The gentleman victorious in the lists was exhibited on his tomb, armed at all points, his battle-axe in his arms, his right arm crossed over the left."

* Argentré, Hist. de Bretagne, liv. viii. Velly in an. and Memoires de Du Guesclin, ad fin.

† "Jamais, *disoit il*, je ne serai aimé ne conveis (bienvenu)
Ainçois serai des dames très toujours éconduits,
Car biençais que je suis bien laid et malfettis,
Mais puis que je suis laid être veux bien hardis."
Vie du Connetable de Guesclin.

* Chastelet, Hist. de Du Guesclin, p. 33. There were no children of either of these marriages. Du Guesclin, however, left a son, *par amors*. The last male heir of this family died in the year 1783, an officer in the French army. In the time of Napoleon, a Madame de Givres asserted and proved her descent from the Constable, and Bonaparte granted her a pension of 6000 francs a year.

Digitized by Google

nour and courtesy no longer hung over them—and the prostrate soldier sued for mercy in vain. Knights were created before and after battles: tournaments, jousts, and other splendid shows were held; and as the essence of chivalry decayed, its splendour seemed to brighten. An affair in Liege, in the year 1408, will show the manner of warfare when chivalry was on the wane. John, Duke of Burgundy, John of Bavaria, the lords of Hainault and Orange, and other princes, appeared in arms to succour the Bishop of Liege, brother-in-law of the Duke of Bavaria, whom the Liegeois had expelled from the city. Instead of following the counsel of the new bishop and his father the Lord de Pier-vves, of remaining within the walls, and wearing out the enemy by a defensive war, the Liegeois, when the bells of the city announced break of day, left their fortifications, resolved to give battle to the well appointed lines of Burgundy. Their numbers were fifty thousand; but except some pieces of artillery, five or six hundred men armed like cavalry, and a few score of stipendiary English archers, they were the disorderly population of the city. Their confidence of success was exalted to madness; and when the hour of battle arrived, they would not suffer their nominal leader, the Lord Pier-vves, to take any means of prudence. It is curious to mark the difference of character in the two parties. There was a wild frantic kind of courage in the Liegeois, inspired by the consideration that they were fighting for their lives and liberties. Their foemen had no such deep-seated enthusiasm; they moved to battle as sportively as to a joust; while their commanders were gaily exhorting their men-at-arms to behave themselves gallantly against the enemy, a rude and ignorant people, who had rebelled against their lord, and who confidently trusted in their superior numbers for success. "If the warriors of Burgundy," (concluded the martial orators,) "will dash into career with knight-like courage, victory will be theirs, and they will gain everlasting honour."

The cannon of the Liegeois did not check the advance of the chivalry; and though the burghers endured well and courageously the close encounter, yet the prudence of their general was verified, that they could oppose no effectual resistance to the nobles and gentlemen trained to war and armed in proof. After an hour's struggle, the line of the Liegeois being charged in rear by a detachment of horse, six thousand of them quitted the ranks, and fled towards a village distant half a league from the field of battle. The cavalry charged them several times, beating down and slaying them without mercy.

The main body of the Liegeois was yet unsubdued; and for half an hour the noise of the war-cries was dreadful; the Burgundians and Hainaulters shouting under their banners, "Our Lady for Burgundy!" "Our Lady for Hainault!" and the Liegeois ringing the air with the cry "St. Lambert for Pier-vves!" The detachment of horse returned, and fell upon the rear of the Liegeois, and pierced it through; a great slaughter was made, for none were admitted to ransom. Near the banner of the Duke of Burgundy, where the conflict raged with most fierceness, the Lord of Pier-vves and his two sons (one was the new bishop) fell, and no consideration for their chivalry or religious profession saved them from death. The coolness of the Duke of Burgundy excites the praise of the historian; and no apology is thought necessary for his conduct, when on being asked, after the defeat, if they should cease from slaying the Liegeois, he replied, "Let them all die together; let no prisoners be made; let none be admitted to ransom."*

Such was the spirit in which war was conducted where the humanising influence of chivalry was unfelt; and I shall not attempt to detail the more horrid crimes of the sacking of towns.

In the short war between France and England in the reign of our Henry V., nothing peculiarly chivalric can be marked in the conduct of the French. The great second series of our wars with France, though not characterised by knightly splendour, is not without knightly interest. France could seldom

* Monstrelet, vol. ii., c. 3. The battle between the Burgundians and Dauphinois, in August, 1421, was fought with similar cruelty. Vol. v., c. 62.

Digitized by Google

boast of braver cavaliers than Dunois, Lahire, and the chevalier Poton de Saintrailles. During the memorable siege of Orleans, at the request of the English, the festivities of Christmas suspended the horrors of war, and the nativity of the Saviour was commemorated by the sound of martial music. Talbot, Suffolk, and other ornaments of English chivalry, made presents of fruits to the accomplished Dunois, who vied with their courtesy by presenting to Suffolk some black plush he wished for as a lining for his dress in the then winter season. The high-spirited knights of one side challenged the prowest knights of the other, as their predecessors in chivalry had done. It is observable, however, that these jousts were not held in honour of the ladies, but the challenge always declared, that if there were in the other host a knight so generous and loving of his country as to be willing to combat in her defence, he was invited to present himself.

History has preserved to us one circumstance, which is interesting, because it marks the change of manners in the attendants on the cavaliers. We have seen that in early times each knight had his squire, who gave arms to his lord, and frequently mingled in the battle himself. The knight now had only his page, who buckled on his armour, and rendered similar acts of personal service; and instead of generous emulation of the enterprises of cavaliers, a mock combat was held between the striplings of the two armies. Each party had its leader and its standard. Their shields were made of osier twigs, and the javelins were blunted. On the first day the advantage was with the French, but on the second, the English youths bore away the standard of their antagonists, and the reputation of victory was theirs.*

After this national contest chivalry continued to decline in France. The civil wars had left that country one universal scene of vice and misrule, and the people looked to the King for some measure of protection. So exhausted were the nobility by their wars with England, that they declared their want of power to lead into the field the customary number of knights; and they therefore prayed a remission of military duty. Charles willingly granted this petition; and no opposition was made to his establishing a force which he might either use against the barons themselves or the nation's enemies. The importance of mercenaries had been extending itself ever since the reign of Philip Augustus, when they were first introduced; for the old levies of feudatories and vassals had in France, as in England, been found insufficient for the great purposes of war. But the new bands of stipendiary adventurers were never a very important branch of the French military force, for the kings could not pay for many; and these hired soldiers were commonly infantry or lightly armed horse, who could not contend in the battle-field with mail-clad knights and squires. National feelings favoured the constitutional levy; and the kings endeavoured to render the country's chivalry of sufficient service by enlarging the time of their attendance. St. Louis increased the period of military duty from forty days to two months, and Philip the Fair doubled the time determined by St. Louis.

Such was the state of affairs in France, when, in the year 1444, Charles established fifteen companies of cavalry. Each company consisted of one hundred lances, and each of these men-at-arms had his archers, a coutiller or soldier, whose weapon of offence resembled a knife rather than a sword, and his personal attendant the page. Every one of these followers served on horseback, and the whole force amounted to nine thousand cavalry. This was intended to be a permanent establishment; and it was understood that the soldiers should be paid out of the state finances, and should not, like the mercenaries of former times, subsist by plunder. These companies of ordonnance have ever been regarded as the foundation of the French standing army. Here, then, closes the public military history of chivalry in France. The new soldiers were stipendiaries, not cavaliers: they were not educated for chivalry: they had not

* All these curious particulars of ancient manners are contained in the Histoire de Jeanne d'Arc, of M. Le Brun des Charmettes.

Digitized by Google

passed through the ranks of page and squire; and not being necessarily gentlemen by name or arms, their deeds could not be similar to those which sprang from the oath of the cavalier. This new military force caused the feudatories of the crown no longer to bring their vassals with them to war, except in certain extreme cases, where the arriere ban was summoned, and then the appearance was but a faint picture of the ancient chivalry. Thus the usage of banners and pennons ceased, and with them the great distinctions of bannerets and knights, because those titles no longer conferred honour and command.* The title of knight lost its military character; and, instead of being bestowed with religious solemnities, after a long and painful education, it was often given to very young men without any martial training whatever, when they first stepped from their father's castles into the busy scenes of life. There was another circumstance which sullied the glory of knighthood; —I mean the bestowing of its title upon persons who were not of the military class. The exact time when this innovation upon chivalry took place it is impossible to ascertain, and I wish not to weary my readers with profitless antiquarian researches. Knights of the law, as distinguished from those of arms, were known in the thirteenth century; and when once the clergy, who exercised the judicial functions, began to assume military titles, (which they did from their spirit of engrossing every thing that was honourable,) the matter soon grew into a custom: the lawyers claimed the privilege of wearing gold, and in every point asserted the equality of the law with the chivalry of the country.† By degrees the title of knighthood began to be applied to men distinguished for their learning, or talents, or who for less honourable causes were favoured by the King. This application of chivalric honours to persons who were not within the order of chivalry, was viewed with a jealous and malignant eye by the military knights, who were not satisfied with the consideration in which they were held when other classes of society copied their titles, and shone by the reflection of martial glory. Their fierce minds felt no respectful sympathy for the literary and intellectual awarders of justice, and they wished that the lance of the knight-errant should continue to be the only refuge of the injured. In effect the title of knight became of little estimation, and in the history of France, through the fifteenth century, we seldom read of the conferring of the order of chivalry upon soldiers in the field of battle.

Chivalry thus decayed in France, before gunpowder became the chief instrument of death. Though artillery had been known so early as the battle of Cressy, it did not immediately come into general use. During the last half of the fourteenth century, the French used it in sieges, and sometimes in the field. But still, when Charles VII. established the companies of ordonnance already mentioned, the strength of the army was cavalry. Soon afterwards the French armies began to consist of infantry; for the soldiers of France were mercenaries, and they were drawn from Switzerland, a country which from its poverty and mountain-form could not boast of many knights and plumed steeds.

Whilst chivalry was losing its martial vigour in the French monarchy, some of the nobility of France preserved it in their castles in all its stateliness and grace. But the records of those times are so faint and imperfect, that any thing beyond the mere circumstance of their general chivalry cannot be learned.

The annals of Burgundy are somewhat more satisfactory. The Dukes of Burgundy became sovereigns of Flanders, and impressed on that country a character of chivalry and romance. Tournaments, jousts, and other knightly shows, graced the wealth of the Flemish cities, at the time when the commercial cities of Italy were distinguished for classic elegance and taste. The court of the Dukes of Burgundy was so high in fame for the lofty daring and gallant grace of chivalric emprise, that when Constantinople fell under the Moslem

* Daniel, Histoire de la Milice Francaise, liv. iv., c. 1. Monstrelet, vol. viii., c. 46. Velly, tome v., p. 394.

† Boutillier, La Somme rurale, compillée par lui, p. 671. Abbeville, 1486.

Digitized by Google

yoke, the hearts of the noble Burgundian knights glowed with the bold and pious desire of recovering the metropolis of eastern Christendom. The desire perished, for it was not supported by the other powers of Europe; and Burgundy, deprived of its hope of leading the lances of the West, in a cause so well worthy of them, is only interesting in the history of chivalry for its gracefulness and splendour. To present the reader with detailed statements of all its martial games would be tedious and unprofitable; but one of them possesses considerable interest, as displaying a very singular state of manners, and proving that the romances, and tales of chivalry, were often realised.

In the year 1468, the sister of Edward IV. of England married Charles, Duke of Burgundy. The banquets and balls which testified the general joy were varied by a martial exercise called the Passage of the Tree of Gold. It was held in the market-place at Bruges, which, on that occasion, exchanged its wonted appearance for one of chivalric gaiety. The ground was unpaved, and sanded like a royal tilt-yard; and galleries were erected around for the reception of the nobles and dames of Burgundy and the wealthy merchants of Flanders. A door, at one end of the lists, painted with a tree of gold, was defended by the Bastard of Burgundy, who jousted with such cavaliers as, by the permission of the ladies, were allowed to deliver the knight of the Tree of Gold of his emprise. According to the humour of the times, many knights appeared in fantastic disguises. One knight, though young and lusty, approached the lists in a litter, and presented every mark of feebleness and age. He requested leave to joust for that once only, and declared that he would then retire to some peaceful cell, and forget, in devotion and penitence, the vain delights of war.

At another time, the dames and damsels were informed that a noble knight, who wished to joust, was without the lists; but that he would not present himself to the ladies of Burgundy until they perfectly knew his tale. All his life he had loved a lady of Sclavonia; and although she had not altogether accepted him as her servant, yet she had encouraged him to hope. His mental sufferings for her love deserved compassion; but she, forgetting that feminine virtue, and continuing her pride, had not treated his devotion as it merited; and he, therefore, for the nine months which preceded his appearance at Bruges, had lived among rocks and mountains, a prey to melancholy. When, however, the lady heard of this unquestionable proof of his passion, she repented of her ingratitude, and had sent to him a damsel-errant, who was now his guide. She had beguiled the tedious way to Bruges by telling him that the pleasures of love could only be reached by labours, desires, and sufferings; that pain gave a zest to enjoyment, and that the greatest offence against love was despair. The lady had bade him hope; the damsel-errant had counselled him to go upon some chivalric quest, in order to dissipate his melancholy; and she had promised to accompany him, in order to deliver the tale of his adventures to his lady mistress.

The dames and maidens of Burgundy accorded permission to this zealous servant of love to attempt the emprise of the Passage of the Tree of Gold. He was preceded into the lists by three men, dressed like Moors, and a lady followed, mounted on a white palfrey, and dressed, as the people thought, like a damsel-errant. She led the knight, who bestrode a cheval de lance, and afterwards came four nobles, clad in the habits of Sclavonia, with the words "Le Chevalier Esclave" worked on their robes. He jousted with a knight who supplied the place of the Bastard of Burgundy, but with what degree of gallantry history is silent.*

I now return to France, whose chivalry, even in the last days of its existence, is interesting; for if ever the bright glory of one man could have changed the manners of his age, the knight without fear and without reproach would have revived the chivalric fame of his country. Pierre Terrail, or Du Terrail, known under the name of Bayard, was born in the year 1476, at the chateau of Bayard, in Dauphiny.

* Memoires d'Olivier de la Marche, vol. ix. c. 2, of the Collection des Memoires relatifs à l'Histoire de la France.

Digitized by Google

His family was of ancient and noble race, and boasted that their ancestors had fought at the battles of Cressy and Poictiers. His own father had been so severely wounded in the service of his country, that he quitted the army before the usual time of retiring. He passed the evening of his life in Dauphiny, occupied in the education of his children, of whom Peter was the only one that aspired to military glory. His wishes were grateful to his father; and his uncle, the Bishop of Grenoble, promised to introduce him to the Duke of Savoy. In his paternal home Peter Bayard had learned some of the duties of the page of early chivalric times: like him he administered to his father and his guests at table; and he had acquired admirable skill in horsemanship. The Bishop took the youth to Chambery, the then residence of the Duke, and by the grace of manner with which he attended his uncle at the dinner-table, and by a fine display of horsemanship, the Duke regarded him with kindness, and placed him in his service. Bayard was then about thirteen years old. Not many months afterwards he became an attendant of the King of France; for the Duke of Savoy, preferring Bayard's interest to his own, wished to advance his fortunes. Charles VIII. put him into the household of the Signeur de Ligny, where he remained till he was seventeen years old, when he was called into the class of the gentlemen of the royal court. Besides acquiring the military exercises of his time, he graced his imagination with fairy and romantic tales: he was a knight in spirit and purpose, and he now aspired to gain the favour of the ladies by the prowess of his chivalry. A very few days after he had quitted his office of page, he broke a lance in a joust with one of the most distinguished cavaliers of the day, and his fame was bruited over all France. He remained all his life in the service of the French kings. The theatre of his exertions was Italy; but, as a very able pen has lately traced the revolutions of that interesting country,* I need not follow him through all his chevisance.

Such matters as display the points of his personal character, and show the remaining chivalric features of the time, come, however, within my province. In 1501, he alone sustained on a narrow bridge the efforts of two hundred cavaliers, who attacked him. It was then that he obtained from the king a device having for its emblem a porcupine, with the words "*Vires agminis unus habet.*" At the taking of Brescia, he received a dangerous wound, and he remained awhile in a private house. When he was about to depart, his hostess wished to present him with two thousand pistoles for the gratitude she felt at his having preserved her honour and her fortune; and he accepted the money only for the purpose of giving it to her daughters, as their marriage portions. So highly was he esteemed, that Chabannes, a marshal of France, and Humbercourt, and D'Aubigny, general officers, all of higher rank and older service than Bayard, fought under his orders. Yet he never rose to high commands. His greatest dignity was that of lieutenant-general of Dauphiny.

But the most amusingly characteristic story of Bayard regards his gallantry. When he was page to the Duke of Savoy, he loved one of the attendants of the Duchess; but the passion either was not mutual, or was not graced with any character of romance, for a few years afterwards the damsel married the Seigneur de Fleuxas. Bayard met her at the house of the widow of his first master, the Duke of Savoy. During supper, the lady of Fleuxas praised the chivalry in tournaments of her early admirer in such high terms, that he blushed for very modesty; and she added, that as he was now residing with a family who had been the first to cherish him, it would be great blame in him, if he did not prove himself as gallant a knight as he had done before. The answer of Bayard was that of a polite cavalier; for he requested her to tell him what he could do that would please the good and honourable assembly, his lady of Savoy, and, above all the rest, her fair self. She advised him to hold a tournament. "Truly," replied Bayard, "it shall be done as you wish. You are the first lady whose beauty and grace attracted my heart. I know that my salutations of

* Perceval's History of Italy, vol. ii., c. 8.

Digitized by Google

you can only be those of courtesy, for I should lose my labour were I to solicit your love, and I would rather die than accomplish your dishonour." He then prayed her to give him one of her sleeves, for he said that he should have need of it in the approaching tournament. The lady accordingly took it from her dress, and he attached it to his.*

The martial pastime was held, and after the supper which succeeded, it was inquired to whom should the prizes (the sleeve and a ruby) be given. The knights, the ladies, and even those who had tourneyed with him, accorded it to Bayard. But he declared that the honour was not his; but that if he had done anything well, Madame de Fleuxas was the cause, for she had given him her sleeve. He, therefore, prayed that she might be permitted to act according to her judgment and prudence. The Seigneur de Fleuxas knew too well the noble character of Bayard to feel any jealousy at this compliment to his wife, but with the other judges of the tournament he immediately went to her and related the matter. She was delighted at Bayard's gallantry, and declared that as he had done her the honour to avow that her sleeve had made him gain the prize, she would preserve it all her life for the sake of his love. The ruby she gave to the cavalier, who had next distinguished himself to Bayard.

And thus lived the knight without fear and without reproach, till the retreat of the French out of Italy in 1524, when he was fatally wounded by a stone discharged from a harquebouze. He fell from his horse, crying, "Jesus, my Saviour, I am dead." He kissed the cross-handle of his sword; and there being no chaplain present, he confessed himself to his esquire, who then, by the knight's command, placed him against a tree, with his face turned towards the enemy; "because," said Bayard, "as I have never yet turned my back to the foe, I will not begin to do so in my last moments." He charged his esquire to tell the King, that the only regret he felt at quitting life was the being deprived of the power of serving him any further. The Constable of Bourbon, as he was pursuing the French, found him in this state, and assured him that he pitied his lot. But Bayard replied, "It is not I who stand in need of pity, but you who are carrying arms against your King, your country, and your oath." The news that he was mortally wounded quickly spread, and excited the deepest grief in the minds of both armies, for he was a valiant soldier and a generous foe. After a while he was removed to a tent and placed on a bed. He was shriven by a priest, and soon afterwards died, as, with true Christian piety, he was imploring his God and his Saviour to pardon his sins, and to show him mercy rather than justice.* He was buried at a convent of Minims, half a league from Grenoble, the principal town of his native country.

During some of the last years of his

* The old French, in which this dialogue was held, is exceedingly interesting and expressive. "Monseigneur de Bayard, mon amy, voicy la premiere maison ou avez esté nourry, ce vous seroit grand honte si ne vous y faisiez congnoistre, aussi bien qu'avez fait ailleurs. *Le bon chevalier respondit*, Madame, vous savez, bien que des ma jeunesse vous ay aymée, prisée et honorée, et si vous tiens à si saige et bien enseigné, que ne voulez mal à personne, et encores a moy moings, que à un autre. Dites moy, s'il vous plaist que voulez vous que je face pour donner plaiser à Madame ma bonne maistresse, à vous sur toutes, et au reste do la bonne et belle compaignée qui est ceans. *La dame de Fleuxas lui dit alors.* Il me semble, Monseigneur de Bayard, mais que je ne vous ennuye point, que ferez foit bien de faire quelque tournoy en ceste ville, pour l'honneur de Madame qui vous en scaura tres bon gré. Vous avez ici alentour force de vos compaignons gentils-hommes François et autres gentils-hommes de ces pays, lesquels s'y trouveront de bon cœur, et j'en suis asseurée. Vrayment, *dit le bon chevalier*, puis que le voulez il sera faist. Vous estes la dame en ce monde qui a premierement acquis mon cœur à son service, par le moyen de vostre bonne grace. Je suis asseuré que je n'en auray jamais que la bouche et les mains, car de vous requirir d'autre chose je perdrois ma peine, aussi sur mon ame j'aymerois mieulx mourir que vous presser de deshonneur. Bien vous prie que me veuillez donner un de vos manchons. Car j'en ay à besongner. La dame qui ne savoit qu'il en vouloit faire le lui bailla, et il le meit en la manche de son pourpoint, sans faire autre bruit." Memoires, vol. xiv., p. 397.

* The Memoires of Bayard, by one of his secretaries, have furnished me with the chief facts in this account of Bayard. A very excellent English translation of them has been published in two vols. post 8vo. The Memoires Du Bellay (Paris, 1572,) have supplied some deficiencies in the narration of the loyal serviteur.

Digitized by Google

life, his fine and chivalrous spirit found a kindred soul in Francis I., who, it is remarkable, was the only French sovereign graced with any share of the character of chivalry. For, while the Plantagenets of England had shone as brilliantly by chivalric as by regal splendour, the Capetian princes of France could not present a king that displayed any powers beyond the ordinary qualities of royalty. The valiancy, the liberality, the fine, open, and manly countenance, and the lofty form of the King, were altogether those of one of Charlemagne's paladins. His imagination was coloured with the gay and lively tints of romance, and so fondly did he dwell upon the fabulous glories of old, that in many a sportive moment he arrayed himself in the guise of the antique cavalier. But here our panegyric must cease; for no preux knight would, like Francis, have pledged his solemn word to observe a treaty, and immediately afterwards have violated it. However unkingly and unknightly Charles V. might have deported himself in treating Francis in prison with severity, and although the terms of the treaty of Madrid were such as no noble victor would have imposed, still the obligation of the pledge of Francis's word should have been felt as sacred. A noble cavalier, a Chandos or Du Guesclin, would have disdained to obtain his liberty by signing a treaty which he intended to break as soon as he should leave his prison. "All is lost, Madam, except our honour," as the French King wrote to his mother after the battle of Pavia: a generous, chivalric expression; and scarcely could it have been expected that he was the man who would have thrown away that honour.

The last faint gleam, however, of the sun of military chivalry in France fell upon Bayard and his sovereign, Francis; for after the battle of Marignan, in 1515, when they fought together against the Swiss, the King was, at his own request, knighted by the cavalier without fear and without reproach. After giving the accolade, Bayard addressed his sword, "Certainly, my good sword, you shall hereafter be honoured as a most precious relic, and never shall be drawn except against Turks, Moors, and Saracens." He then twice leaped up for joy, and plunged his trusty weapon into his sheath.*

Soon after the days of Francis I. the title of knighthood became an empty name: it was preserved as the decoration of nobility and lawyers; and from respect to the ancient glories of their nation, kings received it at their baptism.† Montluc, that man of blood, was the last French soldier who received it in the field of battle. The accolade was given to him by the Duke d'Anguien, after the engagement of Cérisolles, in 1544.

The amusements of chivalry were soon abolished. The accidental death of Henry II. in a tournament,‡ in the

* Memoires de Bayard, in the great collection of French Memoires, vol. xv., l. 458. "Et puis après par maniere de jeu, cria haultement l'espée en la main dextre: tu es bien heureuse d'avoir aujourdhui à un si verteux et puissant roy donné l'ordre de chevalerie Certes ma bonne espée vous serez moult bien reliques gardée et sur toutes autres honorée. Et ne vous pourteray jamais, si ce n'est contre Turcs, Sarrasins, ou Maures, et puis feit deux faults, et après remeit au fourreau son espée." This sword has been lost.

† This mode of receiving knighthood had, however, been stealing into a custom for some time. The earliest instances I have ever met with was in the case of an infant son of Charles VI. (A.D. 1371), who was knighted by Du Guesclin, a cavalier who, one would think, was sufficiently jealous of the honour of chivalry. After the ceremonies of Baptism, Du Guesclin drew his sword, and putting it naked into the hand of the naked child (nudo tradidit ensem nudum), said to him, "Sire, I give you this sword, and put it into your hand; and pray God that he will give you such a noble heart that you may prove as true a knight as any of your illustrious ancestors." So, too, Monstrelet, in his account of the events in the year 1433, says that the Duchess of Burgundy was delivered of a son at Dijon, who was knighted at the font. Vol. vii., p. 147.

‡ Part of Segar's account of this tournament is too interesting to be omitted, "At the fourth course, by marvellous misadventure, the King became hurt with a splinter of the adversary's lance, which pierced his eye so deep as thereby his brain was much bruised. Thus was the nuptial feast disturbed, and joy converted to sorrow. Such is the state of worldly things: gladness is ever followed by sadness, and pleasure accompanied by pain. The rest of the troops who were ready to run were with that accident marvellously amazed, and not knowing what to do, every man let fall his lance, and cursed such triumphs. Some pressed to carry his person home, and others (as touched to the heart) shut their eyes from seeing a spectacle so miserable. The ladies likewise and gentlewomen of the

Digitized by Google

year 1559, did much to indispose the minds of the people from chivalric sports; and when in the following year Prince Henry de Bourbon Montpensier was killed, in consequence of his horse falling under him, while careering round the lists, tournaments ceased for ever; and with their abolition, as Voltaire says, the ancient spirit of chivalry expired in France; for that country after the death of Henry II. was plunged in fanaticism, and desolated by the wars of religion. The spirit did not survive the forms of chivalry; for the intercourse with Italy introduced into France new opinions and feelings. Machiavelian politics banished the open, manly demeanour of chivalry; and the most disgusting profligacy equally distinguished the ladies. It is amusing to observe that, long after the extinction of chivalry in France, the apparent homage and devotion of chivalric love still continued, although it was no longer sustained by virtue. Love, sublimed into idolatry, breathes in every page of the heroic romances which succeeded the romances of chivalry, and reflect the feelings of the nation; and so late as the reign of Louis XIV. a ruffled and well-powdered French general whose soul was not illumined by a single gleam of the character of a preux chevalier, would fancy himself the very pink of sentiment, and sigh at the feet of his mistress,

"Pour meriter ton cœur, pour plaire a vos beaux yeux.
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurois fait aux dieux."

court turned their faces from beholding, and closed their eyes with tears. To conclude, the whole number of courtiers were stricken with sorrow not explicable. The citizens, also, and, generally, all the subjects of that kingdom, were perplexed to see the tragical event of that disastrious triumph, which was intended to congratulate a new peace and honourable alliance. The form and face of the city was thus converted from exceeding joy to unspeakable sorrow: some held up their hands to heaven, others made haste to the churches, and every one, with abundance of sighs and sobs, cried out beseeching God to grant the King's recovery; as if every man's well doing had thereon depended. Then the physicians and surgeons, not only of France but of the Low Countries, came thither to show their skill, using all art and endeavour that might be; but the splinters of the lance had pierced the King's eye so deeply, as the tenderness of the place could not suffer it to be taken out nor seen (the brain also being pierced), no means there were to cure the wound. The King, therefore, tormented with extreme pain, fell into a burning fever, whereof at the end of eleven days he died. In all which time he did never weep, nor speak any words that might be imputed to pusillanimity; but most magnanimously took leave of life. Only this he said, that seeing he was destined to die in arms, he would have been much better contented to have lost his life in the field than in those domestic pastimes." Segar, of Honour, lib. iii., c. 40.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN SPAIN.

General Nature of Spanish Chivalry.—Religion and Heroism.—Gallantry.—Blending of Spanish and Oriental Manners.—Its beneficial Tendencies.—Peculiarities of Spanish Chivalry.—Forms of Knighthood.—Various Ranks of Knights.—Spanish Poetry.—Heroes of Chivalry.—Pelayo.—Bernardo del Carpio—And incidentally of Charlemagne's Expedition into Spain.—The Life of the Cid.—His early ferocious Heroism.—His singular Marriage.—Enters the Service of King Ferdinand.—The Cid's Chivalric Gallantry.—He is knighted.—Death of King Ferdinand.—The Cid becomes the Knight of Sancho, King of Castile.—Mixture of Evil and Good in the Cid's Character.—Supports the King in his Injustice.—The Cid's Romantic Heroism.—Sancho's further Injustice opposed by him.—Death of Sancho.—Instance of the Cid's virtuous boldness.—Character of Alfonso, Successor of Sancho.—Story of his Chivalric Bearing.—The Cid's second Marriage.—Is banished from Alfonso's Court.—Becomes the Ally of the Moors—But recalled.—Is banished again.—Singular Story of the Cid's unknightly Meanness.—Fortunes of the Cid during his Exile.—The Cid's chivalric Nobleness and Generosity.—Is recalled by Alfonso.—The Cid captures Toledo—And Valentia.—Story of Spanish Manners.—The Cid's unjust Conduct to the Moors.—The unchivalric Character of the Cid's Wife and Daughters.—The Cid recalled by Alfonso.—The Marriages of his Daughters.—Basely treated by their Husbands.—Cortez at Toledo to decide the Cause.—Picture of Ancient Manners.—Death of the Cid.—His Character—Fate of his good horse.—Spanish Chivalry after his Death.—Gallantry of a Knight.—The Merits of Missals decided by Battle.—Passage of Arms at Orbigo.—Knights travel and joust for Ladies' Love.—Extinction of Spanish chivalry.

Spanish chivalry awakens the most splendid and romantic associations of the mind. Europe, with her active courage,

Digitized by Google

—her jealousy of honour,—her superior religion;—Asia, with her proud and lofty deportment,—her fervid and sublimated imagination, and the magnificent ceremonial of her pomp,—formed the knight of Spain, and, in consequence of this influence of Orientalism on his character, he represents the stateliness of chivalry as perfectly as the English cavalier its adventurousness, and the French its gaiety.

There was an interesting blending of religious enthusiasm and romatic heroism in the Spaniard. His warm and creative imagination transformed the patron-saint of his country into a knight. He always saw St. James at his side, mounted on a stately white horse, and fighting the battles of Christianity and Spain; and, as if these chivalric exploits were not sufficient, he represented him as the professed and powerful champion of distressed damsels; for he supposed that this celestial ally had freed the nation from paying the annual tribute of a hundred Christian virgins to their infidel enemies.*

Spain, too, appears to our fancy as the very land of chivalric love—of love which was bred amidst difficulties and dangers, where the undistinguishable throng of "hopes and fears that kindle hope" gave a more imaginative cast to the feelings than can be known in the more settled frame of modern society. There was not only the feudal baron violating the laws of courtesy, as in other countries, but bands of Moors were careering over the plains, who did not think that woman was an object utterly unworthy of a perilous quest. Here, then, all the beautiful romance of knight-errantry might be realised; and in the breast of the rescued damsel love would spring from gratitude.

The germs of chivalry existed in the minds of the Visigoths, who overthrew the dominion of the Romans in Spain. Military investiture, respect for women, and the sports of hawking and hunting, were the new circumstances in Spanish character and manners: but in the times of those wretched barbarians, the Visigoths, it is in vain to search for the perfect development of the chivalric character. Chivalry appears only in few and fitful gleams in those dark times; and her golden light did not shine in full and bright display till the days of the Arabians; and, throughout their long reign of seven centuries, it had a very remarkable effect on circumstances and characters. As its glory was personal, chivalry abated much of the fierceness of a religious or a national war; for the cavalier could admire, even in an enemy, qualities which it was his own pride and ambition to possess.

The nations met in the graceful encounter of the tournament, as well as in more perilous battle-field; and the interchange of chivalric courtesies, when the image of war was exhibited, could not but mitigate the ferocity of real hostilities. At the Moorish or Christian festivals, a gallant soldier of the opposite religion would appear, and challenge the bravest of his adversaries to maintain the superiority of his nation and faith; and in maintaining that cause the cavaleresque deportment of the combatants was admired, when the avowed object of their encounter was forgotten; for the object of the assembly was amusement; and the eye and fancy were addressed in these gentle exercises and proofs of arms.*

The people of the two religions insensibly mingled, and each adopted something of the thoughts and manners of the other. If the Christian taught the Moors to use the lance of courtesy, the Christian learned from the Moors to throw the cane, which was afterwards such a favourite Spanish amusement. From them, too, the knights of Spain adopted the javelin, and used it instead of the lance. They were wont to hurl it as forcibly as any Asiatic or Grecian heroes could have done; for a greater

* Warton justly observes, that the apotheosis of chivalry, in the person of their own apostle, must have ever afterwards contributed to exaggerate the characteristical romantic heroism of the Spaniards, by which it was occasioned, and to propagate through succeeding ages a stronger veneration for that species of military enthusiasm to which they were naturally devoted. Warton, Diss. on the Gesta Romanorum.

* Painters are as good witnesses for manners as romance writers; and in Murphy's Arabian Antiquities of Spain there is an engraving from a picture in the Alhamrā, representing a martial game wherein both Moors and Christians contended.

Digitized by Google

defence than what was afforded by mail and a quilted jacket was required to resist the stroke.*

The poets who lived in the chivalric days of Spain invariably gave the moral and personal costume of chivalry to the Arabian as often as to the European. Thus Calaynos, the Moor,† is as much celebrated in the romances of Spain as the Cid himself; and it was the general confession that the knights of Granada were gentlemen, although Moors.‡ This amalgamation of character formed the basis of those unions between the Arabians and the Spaniards which are so frequently recorded in the history of the Peninsula, and which strike the reader as incredible. It has been thought for the glory of the nation to represent the struggle as of ceaseless duration for seven long centuries, and too fierce to allow of the sheathing of the sword: but these alliances were so common, that Spain often presented the appearance of a number of petty states, each attempting to draw the other into its vortex, rather than the general cause of the Cross warring against the Crescent. Independently of these alliances there was scarcely a Christian cavalier of fame who did not in the course of his military career wield his good sword in the ranks of the Musselmans.

Among the blessings which sprang from this free intercourse, religious toleration was not the least valuable one. Spain, which in later times has been so remarkable for the cruelties of its bigotry, was in early days the only country of Europe where religious liberty could breathe. Since the Moors and Christians often treated each other as separate powers, mutual toleration ensued, and this liberal feeling in the minds of the Christians extended itself beyond the pale of their Moorish subjects and allies. The fathers of the reformation were the Albigenses, many of whom were sheltered by the kings of Arragon, while their brethren were persecuted to death in France. No church, save that of England, was in such continued opposition to the papacy as the Spanish; and in every great dispute it espoused the cause of the heretics, as the asserters of the liberty of the human will were always called.

The humanities of chivalry were not limited to toleration or mercy, to the mosque or the field of battle, but Moors and Christians often lived in the same town, and commingled social charities. Friendships were formed, and, maugre the declamation of bigots, dearer affections attached the two nations. The knight was, in consequence of the obligations of his chivalry, the friend of the distressed; and when beauty pleaded, his heart forbad him from inquiring in what religion the damsel had been educated. The passion of love in the breast of the Spanish cavalier was not more fervid or intense than in the breast of the cavalier of any other country. If the Spaniard be considered as a Goth by birth, and an Arab by education, still his natural and artificial circumstances formed but the same character of passion; for both the Goth and the Arab adored as well as loved their mistress, and regarded her as a divinity as well as an object of affection.

There was a gravity, perhaps a jealousy, both qualities of Oriental origin, about the conduct of the Spanish knight, which were foreign to the nature of the chivalry of other countries. The expression of his feelings was unlike theirs. Bold metaphors, rich and varied imagery and glowing sentiments, are mixed with the simple development of passion; and these orientalisms of his verse are not the elaborate and artificial ornaments with which fiction dresses up her image of passion; but as the mind of the Spaniard had been trained by the Arab, it became natural to him to nourish his affection in the splendid dreamings of the East. If he borrowed ideas and fancies from the Moor, it must be remembered that he likewise freely communicated the character of his own system. In no Mohammedan country was woman so high in moral rank as in Spain. The Musselman woman was not passion's

* Froissart, vol. ii., c. 44.

† Calaynos, however, went out of fashion, not for want of merit in the hero, but by reason of the form of the verse in which he was celebrated. Thus the phrase, *Este no vale las coplas de Calainos*, passed into a proverb. Sarmiento, Memorias para la Historias de la Poesia, y Poetas Espanoles, p. 228.

‡ Caballeros Granadinos
Aunque Moros hijos d'algo.

Digitized by Google

object, but, like the lady in chivalry, she was the origin of honour; for she sat in the tournament as the judge of valour, and the Moorish knight received the guerdon of triumph from her hands. Asiatic jealousy abated something of its nature and its forms in Spain; for there women mingled with man in social intercourse, and her beauties were not always shrouded by a vail.*

The forms of chivalric initiation in Spain were similar to those in other countries. The bath — confession — vigil in a church — mass — the spurs — the girding with the sword — the accolade, — these were the chief ceremonies. The knight by his oath expressed willingness to die either for the defence of his law, or of his king or country.† The sword was then ungirt from him by some person of honour, who by so doing was supposed to become his padrino, or godfather, in chivalry, and to confirm the knighthood thus bestowed. No circumstance could ever justify the cavalier in bearing arms against his padrino. He was, on the contrary, to defend him by his sword and his council to the utmost of his ability, and to be everything to him, as a *man* was to his lord in feudal relation.

These were the ancient ceremonies; but they were simplified in subsequent times. The mere dubbing was then held sufficient; and, by a law of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1476, it was ordained that it should be at the pleasure of the King to use the old forms or not, and that the dignity of knighthood should be equally illustrious if they were omitted.

The highest class of knights in Spain was formed of the Knights of the Spur, the Cavalleros de Espuela d'Orada. They were always hidalgos, or gentlemen of birth of three descents. Kings' sons were of this class of knighthood; and no one was crowned till he had been invested with the order.‡

Among the privileges of a knight of the Golden Spur, it is curious to notice that no person could sit at table with him except one of his own rank; no one of an inferior order was permitted to deny the infallibility of his opinion, and to contradict him: and for offences against the state, a knight of this class was to be beheaded, and not put to death in the vulgar mode.

The circumstances in his conduct which were punishable with degradation are interesting, as descriptive of Spanish manners. It was thought necessary to forbid him from stealing the arms of another knight, from selling his own, or losing them at play, or giving them to courtesans. The punishment of degradation, as consequent on the admission of improper persons into the order, is intelligible and just; his girdle and spur-leathers were also to be cut, if he exercised any trade; except, indeed, in captivity, when he was kindly permitted to support his life by the best means of his ingenuity.*

The other class of knights was formed of cavalleros Armados, who enjoyed most of the privileges of nobility. A knight of this rank was free from the payment of taxes and tribute; and so were the knights of the Golden Spur, not, however, as knights, but as hidalgos. The cavalleros d'Armados were always made by the king's own hand; but the right of creating cavalleros d'Espuela d'Orada existed in the will of every cavalier of the order, though it was usually exercised only by the king.

These were the two bodies in which the chivalry of Spain was arranged. The title of Cavallero was also given to every man who was a soldier, in consequence of holding his lands by a military and feudal tenure; but he was not, from that circumstance, necessarily a knight. Regarding chivalry as an order of merit, the cavalleros d'Espuela d'Orada and the cavalleros d'Armados were the only two chivalric knights in Spain.

There were some interesting circumstances in Spanish chivalry. Thus, in Catalonia, besides the squire who bore his shield and lance, each knight was attended by an armed man, whose title was, companion of the Knight, and who was considered as a gentleman that followed the art of chivalry. He was also attached to the knight by feudal relations;

* For proofs of this circumstance, I must again refer the reader to the engravings in Murphy's Arabian Antiquities of Spain.

† Pur su ley, pur su Sennor natural, pur su terra, Partidas, cited by Selden, Titles of Honour, part ii., cap. 4.

‡ Partidas, l. ii., tit. 21, lib. 36, tit. 2, &c.

* Selden, Titles of Honour, part ii., c. 3.

Digitized by Google

for the knight was compelled to grant him land, or rent, in fealty. A knight who was entitled to be attended by this companion was a knight by creation, a miles vero; and he who had not received the order of chivalry, although a hidalgo, was considered as a knight minor, whom, indeed, chivalry would have disowned, but that his birth, rank, and fortune, made him a part of the military state.*

It is curious to notice that, by the general laws of Spanish chivalry, it was usual for every knight to embrace a newly-made knight the first time he met him, in honour of faith and love; and that it was contrary to those laws for one knight to affront another, unless he should first send his defiance or publication of that breach of the bond of companionship.

The pillars of Spanish chivalry were of the same quality and character as those of other countries. Spain had her military orders, her institutions of Calatrava, Saint James, and Alcantara; while the militia of the Temple and the friars of the Hospital were richer in possessions in Spain than in any country of the West. She had also her ballads and romances, in prose and verse, descriptive of the wars and loves of chivalry: but I cannot discover, with some writers, that the chivalric muse sung either a sweeter or a higher strain in Spain than in France or England. Her minstrelsy, indeed, was peculiar, and so was her national character. On one side, longings for patriotic independence, and consequent hatred of the Moors; on the other the loves and friendships of humanity, unaffected by difference of religion or country. The Troubadour chanted his lays of love and war in Spain; and his appeals found a ready way to the heart in Arragon; for of that part of the Peninsula the Provençal was the vernacular dialect.

Spain is rich in her heroes, both of romance and chivalry. The Spaniard will not acknowledge that the Moor was, for a moment, left in tranquil possession of his conquest; and he points to a hero, named Pelayo, as collecting the remnants of the Christians in the mountains of Asturias, immediately after the general triumph of the Moorish arms. He resisted the Moors till his three hundred followers dwindled to thirty. His enemies then left him to perish, for hitherto his food had only been honey, found in the crevices of the rocks. But in after time, the folly of this disdain was seen; for these thirty men were the nucleus round which the scattered Spaniards collected.*

* Tomich, Conquestas de los Reyes de Aragon e los Comtes de Barcelona, 1534, folio 23.

* Our English translators of ancient Spanish poetry need not think, as they are inclined to do, that they are worshipping a shade in Pelayo. The Arabian History of Spain by Ahmadu-bn Muhammadi-bn Mūsa Abū Bakr Arrāzy, a writer of the fourth century of the Hegira, attests his existence in the manner stated in the text. This author, whose name I will not again attempt to transcribe, is one of the authorities of Mr. Shakspeare, whose able dissertation on the History of the Arabs in Spain accompanies Murphy's splendid work on the architecture of that country. Great expectations have always been entertained of the illustrations of Arabic-Spanish history which the Escuriel manuscripts could furnish, The work of Casiri encouraged the most ardent hopes of a successful result of more patient inquiry; and nothing could promise better than the circumstance that his very learned and intelligent successor in the librarianship, D. José Antonio Conde, was engaged in the work. The results of his labours were published at Madrid in 1820 and 1821. I have not been able to meet with a copy of his work in the original Spanish, but I have found it mixed up with other matter in a French book, entitled "Histoire de la Domination des Arabes et des Maures en Espagne, et en Portugal, depuis l'Invasion de ces Peuples jusqu'a leur Expulsion définitive; redigée sur l'Histoire traduite de l'Arabe en Espagnol de M. J. Conde. Par M. de Marlés." 3 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1825. From the preface of M. de Marlés it appears that D. Conde's book is entirely the tale of the Arabic Historians, and not the judicious results of a critical comparison between these writers and the Spanish chroniclers. M. de Marlés has endeavoured to supply the deficiency, and to write a history of Spain from Mariana and others on the one hand, and D. Conde's Arabians on the other. He has entirely failed; for a more feeble work was never written. Much of the fault rests with his authorities; for his history is only another proof of what we possessed a thousand instances before, that sufficient materials do not exist for the compilation of a good and complete Spanish History. The insufficiency of D. Conde's book to all real historical purposes appears in every page. Something, indeed, has been gained on the subject of the Moorish civil wars and dissensions, but such details are without interest. Little or nothing has been added to our stores on the subject of Pelayo, Charlemagne's invasion, the Cid, or the conclusion of the Moorish history; all points whereon information is so much wanted. These remarks

Digitized by Google

Truth does not cast many gleams on Bernardo del Carpio, the next in time and rank of Spanish knights. If we may credit the historians of his country, it was he who nourished, in the Asturias, the plant of national liberty; for when Alfonso the Chaste would have made the land over which he ruled part of the dominions of Charlemagne, the nobility, headed by Bernardo, repelled the invader, and annihilated the French peerage at Fontarabbia. Much of this, perhaps the whole, is the mere dreaming of national pride, not deserving regard: but when I find mingled with the story the assertion that Bernardo gained the alliance of some of the Moors, and that, in after parts of his life, he fought also under Moorish banners, I accept these circumstances as valuable, and consider them as indications of general principles and manners, whoever may be the hero of the tale.

Of the far-famed expedition of Charlemagne into Spain, little or nothing is known, though some French writers have defined the extent of his dominion in that country with the precision with which the political changes of modern times can be traced. Tradition, song, and history, unite in proving that he went into Catalonia and Arragon; but it does not seem that he established any government in those countries; and his march was rather the wild adventure of a knight than the grave purpose of kingly ambition. The Spaniards, as we have seen, claim the honour of defeating him in the valley of Ronscesvalles; but the Arabs also assert their title to the same feat of chivalry: and still further to embarrass the matter, it has been contended, with equal plausibility, that the French under Charlemagne were worsted by the Navarrese and people of Aquitain; and thus that the French of the Adour and the Garonne defeated the French of the Seine. The land between the Ebro and the Pyrenees, and called the Spanish March, was governed, some centuries before the twelfth, by the counts of Barcelona, who owned the feudal sovereignty of the kings of France. This territorial acquisition has been generally referred to the sword of Charlemagne, not, however, on sound historical proof, but rather from the practice of monkish chroniclers, of honouring that emperor with all the deeds of arms which could not accurately be ascribed to any other warrior.

In the life of Count Fernan Gonsalez fiction and fact are blended beyond all power of extrication; and we must descend to the eleventh century for a genuine picture of the Spanish cavalier. No one is dearer to the proud recollections of a Spaniard than the Cid Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar; for it was by the valour of his arms that the momentous question of superiority between the two great powers in the Peninsula was decided as every Christian and Spanish heart could have wished. The honour of his chivalry is bright and pure; for to swear by his knighthood, affé de Rodrigo, is still the most solemn form of a Spaniard's asseveration.

The marriage of Don Diego Laynez, a Castilian gentleman, and Donna Teresa Rodriguez, daughter of a count and governor of Asturias, was followed in the year 1026 by the birth of a son at Burgos, who was called Rodrigo Diaz, and of Bivar, from the conquest made by his father of a town two leagues north of Burgos; but he was more generally designated as the Cid, from the Asiatic title, Es Sayd, (my Lord,) which five Moorish emirs whom he conquered gave him, and which his king confirmed.* Indeed, from the number of his victories over the Moors, he emphatically merited this title.

While yet a youth, he gave an earnest of his martial and ferocious disposition. His father had been insulted by a blow from Count Don Gomez, Lord of Gormaz, but he was unable, from old age and infirmities, to take vengeance, and he mourned in solitude and dishonour. Rodrigo, in order to restore peace to his father's mind, defied and fought the mighty man of arms: he slew him, and returned to his home with the head of the vanquished hanging at his saddle-bow. His father was seated at table with dinner, untasted, before him. Rodrigo presented to him the head, which he called the herb that woul drestore his father's appetite. The

apply only to Conde's researches into the political and civil history of Spain while under the dominion of the Moors, and not to his inquiries into the literary history of the Arabs.

* Chronicle, i., 20.

Digitized by Google

old man embraced his son, and, placing him at the head of his table, declared that he alone was worthy of being at the head of the house of Layn Calvo. His father soon afterwards died. Rodrigo next distinguished himself by beating back an invasion of five Moorish emirs who had fearfully ravaged the country; and instead of treating them with severity, he gave them liberty, receiving their submission and tribute.*

The Cid's affair with Gomez was productive of an interesting circumstance, and illustrative of the manners of that remote and singular period. Ximena, the daughter of the Count, required of Don Ferdinand, King of Castile, the strange boon of Rodrigo of Bivar in marriage, alleging as her reason, that his possessions would one day be greater than those of any man in the Castilian dominions. She declared that the power of pardon rested in her breast; and, like other amatory enthusiasts, she gave a colouring of religion to her wishes, by urging that the marriage would be for the service of God. The King consented, and summoned the Cid to his court; who, on receiving the message, incontinently dighted himself full gallantly, and, accompanied by many knights and other armed peers in festival guise, he repaired to the King at Valentia. Ferdinand received him with so much honour as to excite the envy of the courtiers. The purpose of the summons was communicated, and Rodrigo had no difficulty in consenting to marry the lady whose father he had killed. The marriage was celebrated; and the satisfaction of the King is peculiarly marked, for he made him large grants of land, being aware of his military prowess, and thinking that by this marriage he had secured his allegiance.† The Cid took his bride home, and commending her to the kindest care of his mother, he went towards the Moorish frontier; for, in order to give a zest to his martial pleasures, he had vowed not to solace himself with Ximena's love till he had won five battles in the field.

He was soon called to be the champion of his king; for a quarrel between Don Ferdinand and his brother Don Ramirio, king of Arragon, regarding the city of Caldhorra, was to be decided by arms. The Cid and the other champion, Don Martin Gonzales, entered the lists, and the judges placed them in such situations that the sun and wind favoured neither. They careered so fiercely against each other that their lances broke, but in the closer encounter of swords the Cid prevailed; he slew his adversary; and the judges declared that the city of Caldhorra belonged to Don Ferdinand.

This victory was rewarded by the gratitude of the king, and the envy of the courtiers; and the latter, in the bitterness of their rage, endeavoured to plot with the Moorish emirs, the subjects of the Cid, for his destruction. But the Moors not only disdained the alliance, but revealed the meditated treason to their lord. Many of the conspirators were banished; but regarding one person, the chivalric gallantry of the conqueror prevailed over his just resentment. The wife of the Count Don Garcia prayed for the pardon of her lord: she fell at the knees of the Cid, but he would not listen to her until she rose. She requested him to command the Moorish emir, into whose country she and her husband were sentenced to be banished, to treat them with mildness and benevolence. The Cid spoke according to her will; and the King of Cordova, for the love he bore that hero, treated them kindly, and gave Cabra to Garcia as a habitation. As far as Garcia was concerned this kindness was misplaced; for he made war upon his benefactor, the King of Cordova, till the Cid went and punished him. The circumstances attending this punishment will be told in a subsequent and very interesting part of our hero's life.

The Cid then assisted his sovereign in wresting Viseu, Lamego, and other cities from the Moors. There were no

* Chronicle, i., 4.

† The circumstances about the marriage are so contradictory to modern usages, that the whole story has been regarded as a fable. Abundant evidence, however, of the marriage exists; as that competent judge of Spanish manners, Mr. Southey, observes, "The circumstances of the marriage are not to be disbelieved for their singularity: had such circumstances appeared incredible or repugnant to common feeling, they would have been invented; — whether they be true or false, they are equally characteristic of the state of manners."

Digitized by Google

circumstances of his valour so remarkable as the cruel vengeance of Ferdinand on a man taken at Viseu, who had slain King Don Alfonso, his wife's father. He cut off the foot which had pressed down the armatost, or instrument by means of which the cross-bow was charged, he lopt off the hands which had held the bow and fitted the quarrel, and plucked out the eyes which had taken the mark. The archers then made a butt of the living trunk.* Thus, whatever might have been the influence of chivalry on the mind of the Cid, it certainly had not tempered the ferocity of his Gothic sovereign.

Coimbra was one of the new conquests, and in that city Rodrigo was knighted. The ceremony was performed in the church of Saint Mary, which had once been the great mosque of Coimbra. The King girded on the sword and gave him the kiss, but not the blow, for the Cid needed no remembrancer of his duties. The ladies were his honourable attendants on this august occasion. The Queen gave him his horse, and the Infanta, Donna Urraca, fastened on his spurs. His names, Rodrigo Diaz, were now compressed into Ruydiez, agreeably to a frequent custom at investiture, which in so many respects was similar to baptism. By permission of the King he then exercised the privileges of his new rank by knighting nine noble squires. By this time the vow of the Cid was performed, and he retired awhile from the court to the society of his wife.

Ferdinand soon afterwards died, having, contrary to the principles of the nation's constitution, divided his kingdom among his children. This breaking up the interests of the Gothic monarchy was most unwise; for the Goths were a fierce race, and, in the cause of ambition, brother had shed brother's blood.† The Cid went into the service of Don Sancho, King of Castile, the eldest son of the late sovereign; and in all his wars, whether with Christians or Musulmans, he deported himself after his wonted manner: and his great feats of arms won so entirely the heart of the King that he made him his campeador, or officer, whose duty it was to mark the place for the encampment of the host.

Sancho expressed his purpose of possessing himself of what he chose to consider his inheritance,—the whole kingdom of his late father. His iniquitous design was manfully opposed by one of his counsellors, who nobly declared that there was not a man in the world who would advise him to break the command of his father, and the vow which he had made to him. Sancho then turned to the Cid, stating to him, singularly enough, that he solicited his advice, for his father had charged him upon pain of his curse not to act without his judgment. The Cid replied, that it would ill behove him to counsel his sovereign to contradict the will of the late king. Sancho rejoined, with admirable casuistry, that he did not think he was breaking his oath to his father, for he had always denied the justice of the partition, and the oath alluded to had been forcibly extorted. The Cid found the King was resolute in his purpose; and in the conflict of duties which the circumstances gave rise to, his martial spirit overcame his virtue, and he determined to continue his soldier.

He prevailed upon Sancho, however, not to pass into the territory of Don Garcia, his brother, King of Gallicia, unless he obtained the love and license of his brother, Don Alfonso, King of Leon. Numerous battles were fought, without, however, wearing any chivalric feature, and therefore not within my purpose to describe. In all of them the green pennon of the Cid floated conspicuously and triumphantly; and his achievements were so far beyond mortal comparison, that he was called the fortunate Cid—he of good fortune—he that was born in a happy hour. On one occasion Sancho was taken prisoner, but he was rescued by the Cid; and the circumstances are illustrative of the romantic character of the age. Thirteen knights were bearing the king away, when the Cid, alone and lanceless, for he had shivered his weapon in the battle, galloped after them. He cried to them, "Knights, give me my lord, and I will restore yours to you." They scornfully bade him avoid contending with them, or they would make him prisoner

* Chronicle, i., 13. † Ibid. ii., 1.

Digitized by Google

too. "Give me but a lance, and, single as I am, I will rescue my lord from all of ye," was the heroic rejoinder of the Cid; adding, with increased energy and confidence, "By God's help, I will do it." The chivalric request could not be denied by cavaliers, and they gave him a lance. But such was the spirit and force with which he attacked them, that he slew eleven of the thirteen; on the two survivors he had mercy; and thus he rescued his king.*

Don Sancho became king both of Gallicia and Leon, confining his brother Garcia in irons as if he had been a traitor, and compelling Alfonso to seek for brotherly affection among the Moors. He robbed also his sister, Donna Elvira. Still his ambition was not satisfied; the little town of Zamora, belonging to his sister, Donna Urraca, was wanting to fill the measure of his desires. He despatched the Cid to her on the painful office of requiring Zamora for a price or in exchange, and of communicating the king's purpose of seizing it by force in case she did not accede to his wishes. The great men of Zamora dissuaded the Infanta from surrendering the place: their courageous spirits declared that they would rather eat their mules and their horses, yea, their very wives and children; and the danger of yielding was shadowed out to her in that dark proverbial manner in which the Spaniards often conveyed their wisdom. "He who besieges you on the rock," they said, "will soon drive you from the plain."

The Cid returned to the King with the answer which this counsel dictated. Sancho, in his anger at the failure of the embassy, reproached his campeador with unskilful management of his task; for his conscience told him that he who, like the Cid, had been bred up in the same house with Urraca, must have felt some compunctions at requiring her to give up the right of her inheritance. The campeador did not defend himself by stating that he had discharged his duty as an advocate for the King's purposes; he only declared that he had discharged faithfully his bidding as a true vassal; but he added, that he would not bear arms against the infanta, nor against Zamora, because of the days that were past.*

Incensed at this opposition to his authority, Sancho banished his faithful campeador, who joined King Alfonso in the Moorish territories, with twelve hundred horse and foot, knights and squires, all men of approved worship. Alarmed at this defection of his bravest cavaliers, the counsellors of Sancho advised him to revoke his edict: it was revoked: the campeador returned, but he would not bear arms against the Infanta nor Zamora, because of the days that were past. The King attacked the town, and lost his life in the attempt. There were circumstances about his death that impeached both his brother Alfonso and his sister Urraca. The Castilians murmured their suspicions; but when Alfonso came to be crowned, the Cid was the only man of sufficient virtue and spirit to decline doing homage. Much astonishment was expressed in the countenances of the courtiers and prelates, who had already kissed the hands of Alfonso; and when he was called on by the sovereign-elect to perform his acknowledgment, he boldly declared that all who were then present suspected that by his counsel the King, Don Sancho, had come by his death, "and therefore I say," he continued, "unless you clear yourself of this, as by right you should do, I will never kiss your hand, nor receive you for my lord."

The King expressed his pleasure at these sentiments, and swore to God and to St. Mary that he never slew his brother nor took counsel for his death; neither did his death please him, though Sancho had taken his kingdom from him. Alfonso then desired his courtiers to describe the means by which he might clear himself. They replied that he and twelve of his knights, as his compurgators, must take that oath in the church of St. Gadra, at Burgos. Accordingly, the King and his knights repaired to Burgos, in whose church of St. Gadra mass was celebrated before the royal family, the nobility, and the people.

* Chronicle, ii., 17.

* These last few words are judiciously placed in the Chronicle of the Cid by Mr. Southey. They are not contained in the ancient chronicles and ballads, but they are referred to by some, and implied in all.

Digitized by Google

The King then took a conspicuous station near the altar. The Cid left his place, and, opening the Gospels, he laid the book upon the altar. The King placed his hand upon the volume; and the Cid said to him, with a seriousness of manner approaching to sternness, while the people attended with the intensest curiosity, "King Don Alfonso, you appear in this place to swear on the subject of your brother's death. You swear that you neither slew him, nor took counsel for his death: say now, you and these hidalgos, your friends and compurgators, if ye swear this?" And the King and his knights answered, "Yea, we swear it." The Cid continued, "If you knew of this matter, or commanded that it should be performed, may your fate be similar to that of your brother. May you die by the hand of a villain, in whom you trust; one who is not a hidalgo; one who is not a Castilian, but a foreigner." The King and his knights cried, "Amen." But Alfonso's colour faded, and the Cid, marking this sign of guilt, repeated the oath to him. The King assented, but again his countenance paled. A third time did the Cid press him, for the laws of Castile allowed this reiteration; and once more did the King's language and countenance contradict each other. But the compurgation was now completed, and the Cid was compelled to do homage.*

Alfonso is a very interesting character among the kings and knights of Spain. Whatever participation he might have had in his brother's death, such foul conduct did not sully his general dealings. Justice was so admirably administered in Castile, that the people expressed their joy in the beautiful sentence, — that if a woman were to travel alone through his dominions, bearing gold and silver in her hand, no one would interrupt her path, whether in the desert or in the peopled country. He was the friend of the distressed, the supporter of the weak, the strength of the nation. In his conduct to Alimayon, the Moorish King of Toledo, we may find displayed, in a very interesting manner, the frank dealing, the ingenuousness, the noble confidence, the honour of a cavalier, beautifully coloured with romantic thought. Alfonso was allied with Alimayon, that mighty sovereign of the Moors; but the treaty, instead of being the free union of two equal and independent authorities, had been extorted from Alfonso when the chance of war had thrown him into Alimayon's power. It was, of course, obligatory on the honour and faith of Alfonso; and though he respected his ally, his chivalric pride whispered the wish that his friendship had been obtained by some other mode. In the second year of his reign, Alfonso marched towards Toledo, hearing that the territories of Alimayon had been invaded by the King of Cordova. He made no proclamation of his purpose, and Alimayon, not assured of his motives, sent messengers to him, reminding him of their alliance. The King detained the messengers. He then pursued his course to Olias; and the King of Cordova, divining his purpose, broke up his encampment before Toledo, and fled. Alfonso left his army at Olias, and, accompanied only by five knights and Alimayon's messengers, he rode to Toledo. He was met and greeted by his brother-sovereign, who kissed his shoulder, and thanked him for his truth in coming to his deliverance, and for remembering their mutual oath. The Moorish people expressed by their songs and atabals the love which the Christians bore their lord, but the Castilians severely blamed Alfonso for his implicit faith in the honour of a Moor. Alimayon returned with Alfonso next day to the Christian camp. An entertainment, worthy of the splendour of chivalry, was furnished forth: but while the kings were at table Alimayon was astonished at seeing some armed knights gradually surrounding the tent. His brother-sovereign bade him suspend his curiosity till the conclusion of the feast: the Moor did so; and Alfonso then reminded him that their alliance had been formed when he was in his power at Toledo, but now, as Alimayon was in his power, he required an exoneration of that oath and covenant. Alimayon could not but comply; and agreeably to the form, both Moorish and Christian, acquitted him of his promise, in expressions thrice repeated. Alfonso then called for the book of the Gospels, and said to him, "Now that you are in my power, I

* Chronicle, iii., 10, 11.

Digitized by Google

swear and promise to you, never to fight against you nor against your son, but to aid you against all the world. The oath which I formerly made was forced from me, and therefore not obligatory on my conscience and conduct; but I cannot violate the present oath, for I make it now that you are in my hands, and I can treat you as I please." The alliance was then settled on a firmer basis than ever; and Alfonso, after making the King of Cordova feel the might of his power, took his course to Castile.*

Return we now to our Cid. His wife Ximena was dead; and Alfonso, in order to attach him to his person, married him to his own niece, also a Ximena. The marriage was celebrated on the 19th of July, in the year 1074. For some years the achievements of the Cid were confined to the duties which were imposed on him as King's champion. Questions of territory between Alfonso and the Moors were generally decided by single combat, and the Cid was always victorious. These circumstances should have cemented the friendship of the King and his campeador: but the courtiers, by their well-weaved plots, succeeded in driving into banishment their most formidable rival in the affections of their sovereign. The Cid took refuge with the Moorish King of Saragossa, and continued in that part of Spain for some years the subject and soldier of the Moors, fighting their battles against the Christians; but always showing mercy to the vanquished. Mercy, indeed, to those whom he conquered in the field was a prevailing feature of his character, which he displayed without regard to religious peculiarities: for in his previous battles in the cause of Alfonso he had often released his prisoners unransomed.

The Moors from Africa invaded Spain. In the extremity of his distress, Alfonso recalled the Cid, who soon drove back the enemy. For a considerable time that leader enjoyed the gratitude of his sovereign, and was the soul of the Christian army; and then circumstances arose which his enemies ingeniously perverted to his injury. Alfonso was gone into Andalusia against the Moors, unaccompanied by the Cid, whom sickness detained at home. He recovered, however, in time to meet and repel a Moorish invasion on the other side; and he retaliated on them as far as Toledo, whose king complained to Alfonso of the campeador's violation of the oath and covenant between them. Alfonso was astonished and displeased; and suffering his mind to be influenced by the suggestions of the Ricos-omes, all his hatred of the Cid returned in its pristine force. He saw nothing in him now but the avenger of Don Sancho's death. He summoned him to Burgos; but the Cid replied he would meet him between that town and Bivar. They accordingly met, and the campeador would have kissed his hand in homage; but the king repulsed him, angrily saying, "Ruydiez, quit my land." The Cid instantly pricked his mule to another piece of ground, and replied, "I am now, sir, upon my own land, and not upon yours." The King then commanded him to depart from his states forthwith, not even allowing him thirty days' time, the usual license of the hidalgos.

The moment of his banishment was not an unhappy one, for it was then that he discovered his strength; many knights and other valiant men-of-arms resolving, with his cousin-german, Alvar Fanez, to accompany him through desert and peopled country, and spend their wealth, and garments, and horses in his service. But the joyous exultation of this consciousness of power was soon checked by the grief of quitting his own home; — the deserted hall, the perches without hawks upon them, the porch without its seats, no cloaks hanging down the walls: — all these signs of desolation brought tears into his eyes, and he exclaimed, "My enemies have done this:" but soon recovering his Christian resignation, he cried, "God be praised for all things." He passed through Burgos, where the people could not receive him, for the King had prohibited them to do so; and he whose sword had been girt on in a happy hour, was condemned to pitch his tents upon the sands.

The chivalric history of the Cid is now varied by a circumstance which has not its parallel in the life of any other cavalier on record. He was deeply dis-

* Chronicle, iii., 13—16.

Digitized by Google

tressed for present money, and he obtained some by means not recommended in any code of knighthood. He filled two chests with sand, and persuaded two Jews, who had confidence in his honour, that their contents were gold. He had been accustomed to sell to these men his Moorish spoils, and he demanded on the present security the sum of six hundred marks. The money was delivered. The negotiation was conducted on the part of the Cid by his friend, Martin Antolinez, who received a handsome present from the Jews; but the Cid, the noble-minded lofty cavalier, was the author of this unknightly piece of craft; and he consoled his conscience by the reflection that he acted more from necessity than inclination, and that in time he would redeem all. In order to avoid detection he made the Jews promise not to open the chests for a year, but retain them only as a security.

One little trait of the Cid's coolness and cunning must be noticed. The Jews, in their joy at the excellence of the bargain, were disposed to generosity, and offered the Cid a red skin, Moorish and honourable. The Cid accepted it, telling his friends he would consider it as a gift if they had bought it; otherwise they should add its value to the loan.*

The Cid then went to Cardina; and, after bidding farewell to his wife and children, he quitted gentle Castile, and went into the Moorish territory. He battled with the Moors and vanquished them, sparing, however, those who were the allies of Alfonso. In particular, he won a great victory over them in a sally which he made from the castle of Alcocer, wherein he was besieged by them. The Cid of Bivar was known by his green pennon and gilt saddle. He charged his standard-bearer, Pero Bermuez, not to venture forward before he commanded. The circumstances of the battle are described in the translation of the old poem of the Cid with astonishing spirit:—

"The gates were then thrown open, and forth at once they rush'd,
The outposts of the Moorish host back to the camp were pushed:
The camp was all in tumult; and there was such a thunder,
Of cymbals and of drums, as if earth would cleave in sunder.
There you might see the Moors arming themselves in haste,
And the two main battles how they were forming fast,
Horsemen and footmen mixt, a countless troop, and vast.
The Moors are moving forward, the battle soon must join.
'My men stand here in order, rang'd upon a line!
Let not a man move from his rank before I give the sign.'
Pero Bermuez heard the word, but he could not refrain:
He held the banner in his hand, he gave his horse the reign:
'You see yon foremost squadron there, the thickest of the foes,
Noble Cid, God be your aid, for there your banner goes!
Let him that serves and honours it show the duty that he owes.'
Earnestly the Cid call'd out, 'For heaven's sake be still!'
Bermuez cried, 'I cannot hold;' so eager was his will.
He spurr'd his horse, and drove him on amidst the Moorish rout;
They strove to win the banner, and compast him about.
Had not his armour been so true, he had lost either life or limb;
The Cid called out again, 'For heaven's sake, succour him!'
Their shields before their breasts, forth at once they go;
Their lances in the rest, levell'd fair and low;
Their banners and their crests waving in a row;
Their heads all stooping down towards the saddle-bow.
The Cid was in the midst, his shout was heard afar,
'I am Rui Diaz, the champion of Bivar:
Strike among them gentlemen for sweet mercy's sake.'
There where Bermuez fought amidst the foe, they brake
Three hundred banner'd knights: it was a gallant show.
Three hundred Moors they kill'd—a man with every blow:

* Chronicle, iii., 17—22. Müller, in his Dissertation on the Cid, speaks as positively that the money was repaid, as if the receipt in full for all demands, authenticated by the city of Burgos, were lying on his table. There is no evidence of the repayment in the ancient writers; and when we consider that the Jews were always treated in Spain far worse than the Musulmans, we cannot conclude that the Cid would consider men whom he had cheated as entitled to justice.

Digitized by Google

When they wheel'd and turn'd as many more lay slain,
You might see them raise their lances and level them again.
There you might see the breast plates, how they were cleft in twain,
And many a moorish shield lie shatter'd on the plain;
The pennons that were white, mark'd with a crimson stain;
The horses running wild whose riders had been slain.
The Christians call upon Saint James, the Moors upon Mahound.
There were thirteen hundred of them slain on a little spot of ground."*

His victory over the Moors presented the Cid with a fair occasion of propitiating Alfonso. He accordingly despatched Alvar Fanez into Castile with a gift to the King of thirty Moorish horses, which was accepted. Alfonso did not show present honour to the Cid, but he expressed his joy at the victory; and relieved from all penalties those who had joined him, and those who should be induced to follow his fortunes.† These were joyful news to the Cid and his host; and the faithful messenger brought also such tidings of their families, that, as men as well as Castilians, they were right joyful.

On every occasion the Cid showed a generous indifference to his own share of the spoil; and whatever country he left, both men and women wept, and the prayers of the people went before him, so high was his reputation for acts of individual clemency. Once he invaded a Moorish territory with which Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, was in alliance. The Count and his Frenchmen harnessed themselves in their gay attire, resolved to recover the spoil of the Cid. But he who was born in a happy hour smiled at the vain splendour of the French cavaliers; and while his men were placing their plain Gallician saddles on their horses, he assured them, that for one of their enemy whom they should slay, three would leap from their horses in terror. Berenger's force was defeated: he himself was taken prisoner; and of the spoil the most precious part was his good sword, Colada.

The subsequent circumstances will recall to the reader's mind the chivalric bearing of the Black Prince and Henry V. Berenger was conducted to the tent of his vanquisher, and a repast was set before them; but he refused all refreshment, though my Cid courteously invited him. The next day a very splendid entertainment was set forth; but the Count preserved his pride and sullenness, or only broke forth into expressions of contempt and self-reproach that he had been beaten by a set of ragged fellows. My Cid did not reply to this uncourtesy, but continued to urge him to partake of the repast, and not lament the chance of war. But Berenger abandoned himself to unmanly despondency, and desired to be left alone to die. For three days he continued in this abject state; and he was only roused from it by the noble offer of the Cid to give liberty to him and any two of his knights. The Cid, however, was good-humouredly resolved not to part from him, unless he partook of his hospitality. "If you do not eat heartily, Count, you and I shall not part yet." They then cemented their kindness and gratitude by good cheer, and the Count was permitted to take his leave: but as he rode away he frequently reverted his eyes to know if the Cid were pursuing him, for his own ignoble soul could not credit the generosity of his vanquisher.*

Increased admiration of the Cid's military talents, and the death by treachery of one of his bravest officers, induced Alfonso to wish for a reconciliation with his faithful campeador. It was effected; but not till the Cid had induced the King to stipulate that no hidalgo should be banished in future without a lawful hearing of his cause, and the old license of thirty days. On another great matter he was also the friend of the public good; for he induced the King to consent to preserve the privileges of towns, and not to impose taxes on them contrary to their customs. Alfonso even conceded the liberty of armed resistance to his acts, if ever they should contradict his solemn engagements.

The Cid's happiness was soon alloyed by the death of his son Rodrigo; a young man whose military spirit was so

* I borrow from Mr. Frere's translation of part of the Cid.

† Chronicle, iv., 1—11.

* Chronicle, iv., 14—17.

Digitized by Google

fine and gallant, that the Christians regarded him as the hope of Spain. The Cid was speedily called from private cares and sorrows to a more important undertaking than any he had been ever engaged in. He headed the Christian troops against Toledo; and those troops embraced not only the flower of Spanish chivalry, but many knights from France, Italy, and Germany; so important to the general fate of religion and arms was the capture of Toledo considered. We may lament, with many an admirer of Spanish chivalry, that the memory of their gallant deeds has not been handed down to us, and censure the ancient chroniclers for wronging such worthy knights. We only know that Toledo was captured by the Cid on the 25th of May, in the year 1085.

Among many subsequent military achievements of the campeador I shall select only his engagement with his old foe, Raymond Beringer, Count of Barcelona, who had hastily taken up arms to assist a Moorish prince, also an enemy of the Cid. If the Cid had dreaded numbers he would have yielded: if he had regarded the established reputation of knights, he would have partaken of the general terror, for the French were esteemed the best knights in the world, and the best appointed; and fame proceeded to ascribe to Berenger's the chivalric virtues of courage and skill in no ordinary degree. But the exhortations of the Cid and his very presence animated the troops to heroism; and when the moment of battle, fixed by his own admirable skill, arrived, the event, as usual, proved that he had been born in a happy hour. Berenger and his chief officers fell into his hands; he showed them great courtesy; and released them on their ransom, and their promise on their knighthood never to appear in arms against him again.*

The capture of Valentia was the next and most important circumstance in the Cid's career. The fame of his exploits had drawn to his standard a thousand knights of lineage, five hundred and fifty other horsemen, and of foot soldiers a thousand. I shall not detail the events of the nine months' siege of Valentia; for the picture does not vary in any of its colours and shades from the scenes of blood, and horror, and desolation, in other wars.

There is one circumstance, however, of a different character, and pleasingly illustrative of ancient manners. Among the hosts of the Cid was an Austrian hidalgo, named Martin Paleaz, who was better known for his personal strength than his chivalric courage. The Cid resolved to shame him into bravery; and he seized as a fitting occasion a day when Martin had concealed himself while his brother-knights were tourneying with the Moors. When the dinner-hour arrived, Martin Paleaz, not suspecting that the Cid had discovered his baseness, washed his hands with the other knights, and would have taken his place at the common table; but the Cid grasped his hand, and telling him that neither of them was worthy to sit with such valorous knights as those who were now before them, he led them to his own high table where it was his general custom to sit and dine alone; Alvar Fanez, Pero Bermuez, and knights of equal renown, sitting at other high tables, while the rest of the knights reclined upon estrados with tables before them. There was no equality of knighthood, therefore, among the cavaliers of Spain as in the Celtic nations. There was no Round Table, generously dispensing with the inequalities of rank. It was a subject of honourable ambition with the knights of the Cid to be pronounced worthy of sitting at the table with Alvar Fanez and his companions; and the simple Martin Paleaz plumed himself on his superior honours.

The next day the Christian knights held a joust to the utterance with the Moors; and the Cid was pleased by observing that Martin Paleaz was so much elated that he did not, as usual, quit the field when the lances met in rude shock. The Cid, on returning to his lodging, not only placed his gallant friend by his side, but invited him to eat out of his own dish; adding, that he had deserved better that day than yesterday. This expression revealed the whole matter to Paleaz: he now saw that the Cid had discovered all the artifices of his cowardice, and that he had placed him by his side at table to disgrace, and not to

* Chronicle, v., 17—20.

Digitized by Google

honour him; thinking that such a recreant was not fit to sit with other knights. These reflections of shame kindled in him a spark of courage; and he now resolved to deport himself like a gallant cavalier. In several subsequent battles with the Moors he fought so bravely that they marvelled, and inquired whence that devil had come. The Cid rewarded him with his friendship, and also the distinction of setting at the table with Alvar Fanez and other true knights.*

The Cid became lord of Valencia, reserving, however, the feudal and absolute sovereignty to King Alfonso. He made many arrangements with the Moors, to the credit of his ingenuity, rather than of his honour; for he violated them all as soon as his purposes were accomplished. Finally, he permitted the conquered to live in the adjoining town and suburb of Alcudia; to have their own law administered by their own cadis and alguazils; to enjoy two mosques, one in the city, and the other in the suburb, the Moors paying to the Cid a tenth part of their produce, as the price of his concessions. The Campeador was a banished man from gentle Castile, when he took Valencia, the malignity of his enemies having again wrought upon the jealous temper of Alfonso: but his victories once more reconciled him to the King, who accepted from him a noble present of horses, saddled and bridled, each with a bright sword hanging from the saddle-bow. His wife and daughters now joined him at Valencia; and it is curious to notice, as a point in his character, that his first expression of joy was to run a career on his good horse Bavieca, who performed his exercises so beautifully, that the people marvelled, and he became famous over all Spain.

The Cid mistook the character of his wife and daughters; for he thought that the martial spirit of chivalry animated them as well as himself: howbeit, in truth, they were attached to the gentler duties of life. A Moorish host came from Africa to contest with him his right to Valencia; and, in order to entertain Ximena and her damsels, he placed them in a lofty tower, whence they might view, without danger, the bloody strife. But, unlike the women in other chivalric countries, they turned pale, and trembled at the scene; and the Cid removed them, though their presence was important; for the courage of his troops was animated to fury when they thought that ladies were witnessing their feats of arms.*

New presents were made to Alfonso of the spoils taken on this occasion; and the king and his campeador were formally and publicly reconciled. The Cid humbled himself with oriental prostrations; for many parts of Moorish manners were copied by the Spaniards. They had not met for some years; and time had laid his wrinkled hand on the brow of the Cid. But Alfonso was more particularly struck with the appearance of his beard, which had grown to a marvellous length.†

The Cid was now at a height of power never reached by any subject; and his wealth attracted the admiration of men of nobler birth. The Infantes of Carrion solicited the hands of his daughters; the alliance was favoured by the king; and the Cid and Ximena, though they liked not the character of the young nobles, yielded to his importunities, and the marriages were solemnized. These marriages were an abundant source of infelicity; and he whose good fortune had generally warranted his popular title,—that he was born in a happy hour,—repented of having yielded to the king's suggestions. The Infantes were men of base and cowardly minds, and totally unable to maintain a noble port in the house of the Cid, where courage and martial exercises gave the tone to manners. Mortified personal pride took refuge in the pride of birth; and the Infantes chose to imagine that they had sullied their nobility by allying themselves with the family of the Cid; but they did not con-

* Chronicle, vi., 29. The old Spanish writers observe that the Cid knew how to make a good knight, as a good groom knows how to make a good horse.

* Chronicle, vii., 19. Ximena was like the famous Oriana in Amadis of Gaul, who was always affrayed at military preparations.

† He had let it grow out of respect to Alfonso; and he intended it should be a matter of admiration both with Moors and Christians. Poema del Cid, v., 1230, &c.

Digitized by Google

sider that they had violated the chivalry of their rank when they insulted, and even beat their wives, leaving them in a wood, apparently dead. The ladies were found by a relation, and the Cid became acquainted with the story. He appealed to the king, who appointed a cortez at Toledo, to judge the matter; and weighty indeed must it have been thought, for the present was but the third cortez which had been held during the reign of Alfonso.

To Toledo, accordingly, all parties repaired. The Cid had with him the best and bravest knights, a gallant array, whose tents on the hills round the city were so numerous that the Cid's attendants seemed like a host, rather than a common guard of honour. The hall of the palace of Galiana, the place of assemblage of the cortez, had its walls hung with cloths of gold, and estrados, with carpets, were placed on the ground. At the upper end was the king's chair, the ancient seat of the kings of Toledo; and round it were rich and noble estrados for the chief lords of the cortez. Near the chair of the king, the Cid caused, the day before the meeting, an ivory seat to be placed, which he had won in Valencia, it having belonged to the kings of that city. A number of his esquires, with their swords hanging from their necks, guarded the seat, till their lord should come and take possession of it.

The next morning the king, after hearing mass, repaired to the palace of Galiana, with the Infantes of Carrion, and the counts and ricos-omes of the cortez. The ivory seat excited the envy of Count Garcia, the ancient rival of the Cid; and the chief esquire was ready by arms to repel his sneers and sarcasms, till the king prevented the progress of the contest, by declaring that his campeador had won the seat right honourably; that never had any vassal sent to his lord such gifts as he had done; and that if any one were envious, let him achieve equal feats of honour, and the king would seat him next the throne.

The Cid now entered the hall, accompanied by a hundred of his choicest knights. They were apparelled both for courtesy and war. To the eye of the court their garments were only fine skins of ermine, and the usual cloak of the nation; but underneath they wore hauberks of well-tempered mail, and swords sweet and sharp in the edge. The dress of the campeador himself would have surprised Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, and his mocking Frenchmen. His hose was of fine cloth, his shoes were richly worked: his body was clad in the finest linen, and a red skin, all curiously worked with gold and silver. His coif was of scarlet and gold; but the beard, of which he was so conscious, was bound by a cord, in sign of mourning and wo.

Most of the assembly rose to greet him; and the king offered him a share of his own seat. But the Cid replied, that it would better become him to be at his feet, for he owed his fame and fortune to the goodness of the king and his brother and father; and it was not fit for him that received bounty to sit with him who dispensed it. The king then commanded him to place himself on the ivory seat, for that he had won it like a good man. This he did, and the hundred knights surrounded their lord.

The purpose of the cortez was declared by the king, and two noble counts were sworn alcaldes, to judge rightly and truly between the campeador and the Infantes of Carrion, according to the law of Castile and Leon. The Cid then demanded that his two good swords, Colada and Tizona, should be restored to him. He had given them into the keeping of the Infantes of Carrion, that they might honour his daughters with them, and serve their king. But when they left his daughters in the oak-forest of Corpes, they renounced his love, and as they were no longer his sons-in-law, they ought to render him back the swords. The alcaldes deliberated upon this demand, and decreed that the swords should be restored. The Infantes delivered them to the king, pleased with the moderation of the Cid's demand. Alfonso drew the swords; and the whole court shone with their brightness. Their hilts were made of solid gold, and all the knights present marvelled. The Cid received them from the king; and, smiling, even from the strongest of his heart's affections, he laid them upon his knees, and called them

Digitized by Google

the best swords in Spain, and grieved that the Infantes of Carrion had kept them hungry, and had not fed them with flesh as they had been wont to be fed with. He delivered them to the care of Alvar Fanez, and Pero Bermuez, who solicited the honourable charge.

The Cid then demanded a restoration of the treasure which he had given to the Infantes on occasion of his daughters' marriages. This demand was faintly resisted by the argument, that it had been spent in the King's service. The Cid judiciously took advantage of the admission, that the treasure had been received, and then fairly enough contended that it touched not him, if the Infantes had expended money for the King; and so Alfonso himself judged the matter; and the alcaldes decreed the restitution of the treasure.

To carry this ordinance into effect the court was adjourned; and when it reassembled the Cid rose from his ivory seat, and recapitulating the circumstances of the marriages, and not sparing the King for his share in them, he demanded of the Infantes the reasons of their conduct: he declared he would not let them depart without mortal defiance. He added, laying his hand upon his beard, (his usual sign of wrath,) that if the King and the cortez would not right him he would do justice to himself; he would follow them to Carrion; he would take them by the throat, and carry them prisoners to his daughters at Valencia, where they should do penance for their offences, and be fed with food which they deserved.

The King mildly remarked, that in promoting the marriages he had acted according to the request of the Infantes themselves, and he saw that much of the dishonour touched himself. To the storm of passion with which the Cid had concluded his address, the King firmly replied that the cause was before the cortex, and that the alcaldes would pass a righteous sentence.

The Cid recovered his serenity, and kissing the King's hand, returned to his ivory seat.

After a brief pause he rose, and thanking the King for his compassion for his and his daughters' dishonour, he defied the Infantes to mortal combat.

The King called upon them to reply; and they boldly excused their leaving their wives: for the daughters of Ruy Diaz of Bivar were not worthy of alliance with men who were the best hidalgos in all Castile. Regarding the acts of personal cruelty and unchivalric deportment, they said nothing. They denied the necessity of doing battle upon such a matter with any one. Count Don Garcia then began to lead the Infantes from the court, and exclaimed, as he passed the Cid, "Let us leave him, sitting like a bridegroom in his ivory chair, and thinking that his beard will frighten us."

The campeador stroked his chin, and sternly demanded what the Count had to do with his beard. "Thanks be to God," he added, "never son of woman hath taken me by it; never son of Moor or of Christian hath plucked it as I did yours in your castle of Cabra, Count, when I took your castle of Cabra, and took you by the beard: there was not a boy of the host who did not pull it."—"The hair which I plucked has not, methinks, grown again," he added with a look of bitterest scorn.

To this cruel sarcasm Garcia could only answer by the low scurrility of desiring the Cid to go back to his own country, and take toll for his mills as he used to do.

This insult was scarcely to be tolerated. The knights of the Cid grasped their swords, and looked at each other with fierce countenances; but their respect for the command of their lord not to act till he bade them, kept them silent. The Cid himself forgot his own injunctions, and reproached his former standard-bearer, Pero Bermuez, for not taking up his cause. That valiant knight, dashing aside some personal insults with which the Cid had mingled his censure, folded his cloak round his arm, and fiercely striding to the Count Garcia, felled him to the ground.

Immediately the court was a scene of wild uproar; swords were drawn, and no respect for the presence of the King could quell the fray. At length the passions exhausted themselves, and the court resumed its sittings. Alfonso declared that he would defend the rights of all parties, and advised Garcia and his friends to support their cause by courtesy and reason, and not to revile the Cid. The

Digitized by Google

cause was proceeded with; and the King with the alcaldes finally decreed that the Infantes, and their uncle Count Suero Gonzales, who had abetted them in their dishonour to the ladies, should do battle with three of the Cid's people, and acquit themselves if it were in their power.

The battle accordingly was fought, and the champions of the Cid were victors, agreeably to the decision of the twelve true men appointed as judges, and the consenting voice of the King and people. The Infantes of Carrion and their uncle were declared traitors. The family itself sunk into disgrace; a worthy punishment, as the Spanish writers declare, of them who dishonour and desert fair lady.*

These circumstances were considered of equal force with a canonical dissolution of marriage; and the daughters of the Cid were shortly afterwards united to the Infantes of Navarre and Arragon, men of far more power and rank than their former lords. Valencia witnessed the present, as it had the former nuptials. Bull-fights, throwing at the target, and throwing the cane, were some of the amusements of the Christians, and the joculars were right nobly rewarded. The Moors, also, were animated and sincere in their rejoicings; and the spectators were pleasingly distracted between the Christian and the Moorish games. For eight days the rejoicings lasted: each day the people were feasted, and each day they all ate out of silver.

These were the last circumstances of importance in the life of the Cid. Five years afterwards, on the 29th of May, 1099, he died at Valencia. Romance writers have endeavoured to adorn his closing scene; but I cannot select from their works any thing that is either beautiful or probable.

In one of those historical works which have done honour to the literature of our age, much praise is bestowed upon the Cid, Ruy Diaz, for his frankness, honour, and magnanimity.* But, in truth, to very little of this commendation is our hero's fame entitled. His conduct to the poor Jews of Burgos will not be urged as a proof of his free and noble dealing, of that frank sincerity which interests us in contemplating the worthies of chivalric times; and as for his honour, that sacred possession of a knight, he pledged it often to the Moors of Valencia, and violated it to gratify his objects as a conqueror. Look at him in the cortez: observe his coolness, his deliberation, his gradual statement of his demands. Here was the calculating man of vengeance, not the gay, the wild cavalier throwing down his gauntlet, and displaying his whole soul in one burst of generous passion. There is a sternness about the Cid which repels our gaze. His mind was not enriched by Arabic learning, and grateful to his teachers; nor was it softened by recollections of Arabian loves: and when I see him pitying his sword that it had not received the food it deserved, I can scarcely allow him a station among the heroes of chivalry, those brilliant spirits; for I recognise nothing but the barbarism of the Goth, infuriated by the vengeful spirit of the Moor. Let the Cid, however, have his due praise. Several instances of his generosity to prisoners have been given. His treatment of the Moors of Valencia, after he had once settled the government, was noble. He suffered no difference of religion to affect his paternal regards to his people; and thence it happened that Moors and Christians dwelt together under his mild sway with such accord that the union seemed the long result of ages. One of these Moors gave him the following praise, with which I shall conclude my remarks on his character: "The Cid, Ruy Diaz," said he, "was the man in the world who had the bravest heart, and he was the best knight at arms, and the man who best maintained his law; and in the word which he hath promised he

* Chronicle, books 9 and 10. Every reader of Spanish history knows how fiercely the story of the Infantes has been discussed. I shall not burden my pages with a statement of the arguments, but I think that the balance is very much in favour of the truth of the story. Mr. Southey's remark is judicious. "The conduct of the Infantes of Carrion is certainly improbable. There are instances enough of such cruelty, but none of such folly. Yet nothing can be so improbable as that such a story should be invented and related so soon after their death; of persons who had really existed, and were of such rank: and that it should be accredited and repeated by all the historians who had lived nearest the time."

* Hallam's Middle Ages, iii., 482, 2d edit.

Digitized by Google

never fails; and he is the man in the world who is the best friend to his friend, and to his enemy he is the mortalest foe among all Christians; and to the vanquished he is full of mercy and compassion; and full thoughtful and wise in whatever thing he doeth; and his countenance is such that no man seeth him for the first time without conceiving great fear."

As a horse was part and parcel of a knight, I cannot take leave of the Cid without saying a few words regarding his steed Bavieca. After the death of his master no one was permitted to bestride that good horse. Gil Diaz, a valiant knight, and companion of the Cid, took him in charge, feeding him and leading him to water with his own hand. Bavieca lived two years and a half after the death of his master the Cid; and when he died Gil Diaz buried him before the gate of the monastery at Valencia, in the public place, and planted two elms upon the grave, the one at his head, the other at his feet.

I have already alluded to the mighty influence of the Cid on the political history of Spain—his decision of the great question of Christian or Mohammedan superiority. After his death the impulse which he had given to the Spanish power was kept alive; the Moors never recovered themselves from the prowess of his knighthood, and, finally, they were driven from the Peninsula. It was only when the general Christian cause was the weakest, that the Spanish Government, and people, who were occasionally conquerors, extended the humanities of chivalry to the Moors. But when the Crescent waned, this mild aspect was changed; for revenge and all the baleful passions of victory swept away the gentle graces of the cavalier, and intolerance and cruelty rose with the increasing power of the Christians. Concessions of liberty of conscience were made to the Moors, but the treaties were broken, apparently, that mockery might embitter pain. The Moors and Christians did not deport themselves to each other with chivalric courtesy; and history gives no warrant to the romantic stories of any magnanimity or grandeur of soul illuminating the last years of the Arabs in Spain.* Among the Christians themselves, indeed, the chivalric character was sustained in all its vigour and gracefulness. Ecclesiastical history furnishes us with a very amusing instance of its influence. When Alphonso IX., about the year 1214, had expelled the Moors from Toledo, he endeavoured to establish the Roman missal in the place of St. Isidore's. But the people clung to their old ideas, and resisted the innovation. Those were not the days of theological argument; but the sword was the only means of deciding disputes, and of determining truth. Each party chose a doughty knight, and commended to his chivalry the cause of a missal. The two champions met in the lists; the two parties ranged themselves in the surrounding galleries, and to the joy of the Spaniards the champion of St. Isidore was victorious.*

But the gallantry of the Spaniards is the most interesting subject of regard. James II., King of Arragon, decreed that every man, whether a knight or another, who should be in company with a noble lady, might pass safe and unmolested, unless he were guilty of murder.† In the minds of Spanish knights, religion and love were ever blended; and he who, thinking of his mistress, took for his motto the words, "Sin vos, y sin Dios y mi," (without thee, I am without God and without myself,) was not thought guilty of impiety. In romantic gallantry the Spaniard was a very perfect knight. Garcia Perez de Vargas, who lived in the thirteenth century, was a splendid exemplar of Spanish chivalry. His valour excited the envy of men of nobler birth, who displayed the meanness of their spirit in questioning his title to bear arms. He once withstood the Moors, while those of more ancient heraldry quailed. When he had discomfited the foe, he returned

* The world has generally been acquainted with the fall of Grenada by the work of Genez Perez de Hita, which was translated into French, and acquired popularity when Florian made it the foundation of his Gonsalvo de Cordova. There is very little historical truth in the volume, and the value of the pictures of manners it contains has been much overrated: those pictures, moreover, are Moorish rather than chivalric, and therefore not of service to the present work.

* Warton on the Gesta Romanorum, in the first volume of his History of English Poetry.

† De Marca, Marca Hispanica, p. 1428.

Digitized by Google

to his host, and striking his battered shield, remarked to his envious rival, in a tone of justifiable sarcasm, "You are right in wishing to deprive me of my coat of arms, for I expose it to too great dangers. It would be far safer in your hands; for so prudent a knight as yourself would take very excellent care of it."* Garcia was such a doughty knight, that his very presence terrified the Moors. He and a companion were once suddenly met by a party of seven of their turbaned foes. His friend took flight, but Perez closed his vizor, and couched his lance. The Moors declined a battle. Perez reached the camp: his conduct met with its guerdon; but he had too much chivalric kindness warming his heart to answer the demand, who it was that had forsaken him in so perilous a moment. There was another circumstance in this affair which marks the gallantry of our knight. While his martial demeanour was keeping the Moors at bay, he found that his scarf had fallen from his shoulder. He calmly turned his horse's head, recovered his mistress's favour, and then pursued his course to the camp, the Moors being still afraid to attack him.†

On the first day of the year 1434, while the Spanish court was holding its festivities at Medina del Campo, a noble knight, named Sueno de Quinones, presented himself before the King (John II.) with a train of nine cavaliers gallantly arrayed, whose lofty demeanour and armorial ensigns showed that they prided themselves on the perfect purity of their Christian descent. The King smiled graciously on the strangers; and learning from his attendants that they had come to court in order to address his power, he waved his hand in sign of permission for them to speak. A herald whom they had brought with them stepped in front; and in the name of Sueno de Quinones spoke thus: "It is just and reasonable that any one who has been so long in imprisonment as I have been should desire his liberty; and, as your vassal and subject, I appear before you to state, that I have been long bound in service to a noble lady; and, as is well known, through heralds, not only in this country, but through foreign lands, every Thursday I am obliged to wear a chain of iron round my neck. But, with the aid of the Apostle James, I have discovered a means of liberation. I and my nine noble friends propose, during the fifteen days that precede and the fifteen days that follow the festival of that Saint, to break three hundred lances, with Milan points,* in the following manner: Three lances with every knight who shall pass this way on his road to the shrine of the Saint. Armour and weapons will be provided in ample store for such cavaliers as shall travel only in palmer's weeds. All noble ladies who shall be on their pilgrimage unattended by a

* Con razon (dize) nos quitais las armas del linage, pues las ponemos à tan graves peligros, y traucos: vos las mereceis mejor, que como mas recatado, les teneis mejor guardados. Mariana, Hist. de Espana, xiii., 7.

† Mariana, xiii., 7. This last story of Garcia Perez de Vargas is the subject of a beautiful ballad, which Mr. Lockhart has translated. The stanzas regarding the scarf are particularly pleasing.

"He look'd around, and saw the scarf, for still the moors were near,
And they had pick'd it from the sward, and loop'd it on a spear.
'These Moors,' quoth Garci Perez, 'uncourteous Moors they be —
Now, by my soul, the scarf they stole, yet durst not question me!
'Now reach once more my helmet.' The esquire said him nay,
'For a silken string why should you fling, perchance, your life away?'
—'I had it from my lady,' quoth Garci, 'long ago,
And never Moor that scarf, be sure, in proud Seville shall show.'—
But when the Moslems saw him, they stood in firm array.
—He rode among their armed throng, he rode right furiously.
—'Stand, stand, ye thieves and robbers, lay down my lady's pledge,'
He cried, and ever as he cried, they felt his faulchion's edge.
That day when the lord of Vargas came to the camp alone,
The scarf, his lady's largess, around his breast was thrown:
Bare was his head, his sword was red, and from his pommel strung
Seven turbans green, sore hack'd I ween, before Garci Perez hung."

Lockhart's Ancient Spanish Ballads, p. 75.

* This is another and singular proof of the generally acknowledged excellence of Italian armour.

Digitized by Google

chivalric escort, must be contented to lose their right-hand glove till a knight shall recover it by the valour of his arms."

When the herald concluded, the King and his council conferred together, and they soon agreed that the laws of chivalry obliged them to consent to the accomplishing of this emprise of arms. When the royal permission was proclaimed by the heralds, Sueno got a noble knight to take off his helmet, and thus, bareheaded, approached the throne, and humbly thanked the King. He afterwards retired with his nine friends; and having exchanged their heavy armour for silken dresses of festivity, they returned to the hall and joined the dance.

Six months were to elapse before the valiant and amorous Sueno de Quinones could be delivered from his shackle; and all that time was spent by him and his friends in exercising themselves to the use of the lance, and in providing stores of harness and lances for such knights as would joust with them. The place that was arranged for the contest was the bridge Orbigo, six hours' ride from Leon, and three from Astorga. The marble effigies of a herald was set up in the road; and by the label in its right hand travellers were acquainted that they had reached the passage of arms. The lists were erected in a beautiful plain formed by nature in a neighbouring wood. Tents for banquetting and repose were raised, and amply furnished by the liberality of Sueno. One tent was admirable for the beauty of its decorations, and more so for its purpose. It contained seven noble ladies, who, at the request of the mother of Sueno, devoted themselves to attend upon such of the knights as should be wounded in the joust. At the time appointed, Sueno de Quinones appeared in the lists with his nine companions, all arrayed in the most splendid tourneying harness, the enamoured knight himself bearing round his neck the chain of his mistress, with the motto, which his friends also wore on some part of their armour, "Il faut délibérer." Many stranger knights jousted with him, and his success was generally distinguished.

The fair penitents to the shrine of the saint were stopped; and such as were of noble birth were asked by the King's herald to deliver their gloves. The pride and prerogatives of the sex were offended at this demand: the ladies resisted, as much as words and looks of high disdain could resist, the representative of the King; but they yielded with grace and pleasure when they were asked to surrender their gloves in the name of the laws of chivalry, of those laws which had been made under their auspices, and for their benefit. There was no lack of knights to peril themselves for the recovery of these gloves in the listed plain; and if the champions of the dames were ever worsted by the hardier sons of chivalry, the gallantry of the judges of the tournament would not permit the ladies to suffer from any want of skill or good fortune in their chosen knights. When the thirty days had expired, it appeared that sixty-eight knights had entered the lists against Sueno de Quinones; and in seven hundred and twenty-seven encounters only sixty-six lances had been broken;—a chivalric phrase, expressive either of the actual shivering of lances, or of men being thrown out of their saddles. The judges of the tournament, however, declared, that although the number of lances broken was not equal to the undertaking, yet as such a partial performance of the conditions of the passage at arms had not been the fault of Sueno de Quinones, they commanded the king at arms to take the chain from his neck, and to declare that the emprise had been achieved: accordingly the chain was removed, and the delivered entered Leon in triumph.*

The knights of Spain were, indeed, on every occasion gallant as well as brave. When the heralds of France and England crossed the Pyrenees to proclaim the tournaments, which were to be held in honour of woman's beauty, there was no lack of Spanish cavaliers to obey the sound, and assert the charms of the dark-eyed maidens of their land. This was their wont during all the ages of chivalry; and so late as the fifteenth century one of them travelled so far as England by

* Libro del paso honroso, defendido por el excelente caballero Sueno de Quinones, copilado de un libro antiquo de mano, por Juan de Pineda. 1588. Reprinted, Madrid, 1783.

Digitized by Google

command of his mistress, and for her sake wished to run a course with sharp spears. His dress confirmed his challenge; for he wore round his arm a kerchief of pleasance, with which his lady-love had graced him before he set out on his perilous quest of honour.* This historical fact is very important, as proving that the writers of Spanish tales, in describing the deep devotion of Spanish love, the fidelity which no time nor absence could shake, drew their pictures from no imaginary originals. The romancers shadowed forth the manners of their nation, like the good-humoured Cervantes, who, while ridiculing the absurdities of knight-errantry, as displayed in works of fiction, never forgot the seriousness approaching to solemnity, the perfect courtesy, the loftiness, and the generosity of the Castilian gentleman.

While the knights of England were admiring the gallantry of the Spanish cavalier, who appeared among them to render himself worthy the smiles of his lady-love, another knight of Spain, named Sir John de Merlo, or Melo, left his native land to add new honours to his shield. He repaired to the court of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, which was then held at Arras, and proclaiming that he wished to joust, in order to win that high fame which was the guerdon of chivalry, he sounded his challenge for any noble knight to break three lances with him. It was not long before that proved and renowned cavalier, Peter de Bauffremont, Lord of Chargny, answered the challenge, prevailing, in return, on the Spaniard to consent to tourney with him on foot with battle-axes, swords and daggers. The two noble knights then appeared in the lists of the market-place at Arras, which had been fashioned into a tilting ground. The Duke of Burgundy sat as judge of the lists; and he was surrounded by the Dukes of Bourbon and of Gueldres, the Counts of Rochemont, of Vendome, D'Estampes, and, indeed, the chiefest nobility of his states. The Spanish knight entered then the lists, followed by four noble cavaliers of Burgundy, whom the Duke had appointed to do him honourable service. One of them bore on the end of a lance a small banner emblazoned with his arms. The other knights carried his lances, and thus, without more pomp, he courteously made his obeisance to the Duke of Burgundy, and retired from his presence by the way he had entered on the left hand of his Grace. After a pause extended beyond the wonted time, in order to raise the expectation of the spectators into anxiety, the Lord of Chargny pressed his bounding steed into the lists. He was grandly accompanied by three Burgundian lords, and the English Earl of Suffolk, all bearing his lances. Behind him were four coursers, richly caparisoned with his arms and devices, with pages covered with robes of wrought silver; and the procession was closed by the greater part of the knights and squires of the Duke of Burgundy's household. The Lord of Chargny gracefully bent his body while his proud steed was performing its caracoles, and he then retired through a gate opposite to that of the Spanish knight. At the signal of the Duke the trumpets sounded to horse, the knights pricked forth, the herald's cry resounded, "Faites vos devoirs, preux chevaliers;" and the career of the gallant warriors deserved the noblest meed; for they tilted with their lances with such admirable skill, that though their weapons shivered, neither cavalier was hurt. The second and the third courses were ran with similar chivalric bearing, and the morning's amusement closed.

On the next day the Duke of Burgundy, followed by all his chivalry, repaired to the market place of Arras, in order to witness the second series of these martial games. The Lord of Chargny, as the challenger, appeared first; and it was full an hour before Sir John de Merlo entered the lists: for the Spaniard resolved to retort the delay which the Lord of Chargny had made on the preceding morning. The king-at-arms, called Golden Fleece, proclaimed, in three different parts of the lists, that all who had not been otherwise ordered should retire to the galleries, or without the rails; and that no one should give any hindrance to the two champions, under pain of being punished, by the Duke of Burgundy, with death. The knights then advanced from their respective pavilions, wielding their battle-

* Paston, Letters, vol. i., p. 6.

Digitized by Google

axes. They were armed in proof; but the Spanish knight, with more than the wonted boldness of chivalry, wore his vizor raised. They rushed upon each other with impetuous daring, and exchanged many mighty blows; but the Lord of Chargny was sore displeased that his adversary did not close his vizor. After they had well proved their valour, the Duke of Burgundy threw down his warder, and the jousting ceased. But the noble knights themselves exclaimed against so early a termination of their chivalric sports; particularly the Spaniard, who declared, as the reason for his anger, that he had travelled at a great expense, and with much fatigue by sea and land, from a far country, to acquire honour and renown. But the Duke remained firm, only soothing his denial by complimenting him on the honourable mode in which he had accomplished his challenge: and, afterwards, the Burgundian nobles vied with each other in praising a cavalier who had shown the unprecedented daring of fighting with his vizor raised. The Duke also entertained him in his palace; and, in admiration of his bravery, made him so many rich presents, that the expenses of his journey were amply reimbursed. He soon afterwards mounted his good steed, and left Arras on his return to his own country; and beguiled the long and lonely way by recollections of the past, and dreams of future glory.*

The remainder of the history of Spanish chivalry, namely, its decline, may be shortly told. All its martial forms were destroyed by the iron yoke of the house of Austria; and so perfectly, that in the state of things which succeeded the warfare of the shield and the lance, the Spanish infantry took the lead, and was the most skilful in Europe. At the battle of Ravenna, in the year 1512, they defeated the chivalry of France, and proved the excellence of the new system of warfare. Something, however, of that excellence must be attributed to the spirit of ancient knighthood; for it borrowed the principles of its discipline from ancient times.

In one respect the chivalry of Spain resembled the general chivalry of Europe in its decline; for, at the introduction of the art of printing into the Peninsula, the old romances were the first subjects of the press, as works most agreeable to national taste. Although Spanish poetry was now but a faint copy of the Italian muse, yet the spirit of the antique song occasionally breathed, in wild and fitful notes, the heroism and loves of other times. The point of honour was long preserved as the gem of the Spanish character; and chivalric gallantry continued intense and imaginative, for Arabian literature left impressions on the Spanish mind which the Inquisition could not efface; and thus, while in other countries of Europe woman was gradually despoiled of those divine perfections with which the fine and gallant spirit of chivalry had invested her, and moved among mortals as formed of mortal nature, yet, in the imagination of the grave, the musing Spaniard, she was preserved in her proud pre-eminence, and was still the object of his heart's idolatry.

* Monstrelet, vol. vii., c. 82.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

Chivalry did not affect the public History of Germany.—Its influence on Imperial Manners.—Intolerance and Cruelty of German Knights.—Their Harshness to their Squires.—Avarice of the Germans.—Little Influence of German Chivalry.—A remarkable Exception to this.—A Female Tournament.—Maximilian, the only chivalric Emperor of Germany.—Joust between him and the French Knight.—Edict of Frederic III. destroyed Chivalry.—CHIVALRY IN ITALY.—Lombards carried Chivalry thither.—Stories of chivalric Gallantry.—But little martial Chivalry in Italy.—Condottieri.—Chivalry in the North.—Italians excellent Armourers but bad Knights.—Chivalry in the South.—Curious Circumstances attending Knighthood at Naples.—Mode of creating Knights in Italy generally.—Political Use of Knighthood.—Chivalric literature.—Chivalric sports.

CHIVALRY may be considered either in a political or military aspect, either as influencing the destinies of nations, or affecting the mode and circumstances of war. In Germany it offers to us no circumstances of the former class. Germany was connected with Italy more

Digitized by Google

than with any other country of Europe during the middle ages. The wars of the emperors for the kingdom of Italy did not proceed from any principles or feelings that can be termed chivalric; nor can any ingenuity torture the fierce contests between the popes and the emperors into knightly encounters. The chivalry of Germany seldom appeared in generous rivalry with that of any other country; and in circumstances which leave no doubt of the issue, if the chivalry of England or France had been engaged, the Imperial knights quailed before partially-disciplined militia. In Italy the power of Milan was more dreaded than that of the emperor Frederick Barbarossa; and he subdued the northern states rather by drawing their cities to his side, which were jealous of the Milanese authority, than by the force of his chivalry. A few years afterwards the cities of Lombardy formed a league against him; and when the question of Italian independence was debated in arms, the militia of the cities triumphed over the flower of German chivalry in the battle of Legnano. Nor could Germany ever afterwards thoroughly re-establish her power. Many political circumstances and moral reasons prevented it; but the weakness of her military arm was the chief and prevailing cause.

The Germans invented nothing in chivalry, and borrowed nothing from the superior institutions of other countries. At the commencement of the fifteenth century the inferiority of their chivalry was plainly displayed. The German cuirassiers, with whom the Emperor Robert descended into Italy, could not cope with the condottieri of Jacopo Verme, who protected the states of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. It was found that the horses of the Germans were not so well trained as those of the Italians, and the armour of the knights was heavy and unwieldy; and thus the bigoted attachment of the Germans to ancient customs saved Italy from subjugation.* The cuirassiers of Germany were equally impotent against the hardy peasantry of Switzerland.

Though not in the public history, yet in what may be called the manners, of the empire, there was one great chivalric feature. The dignity of service was strikingly displayed. The proudest nobles were the servants of the Emperor, his butler, his falconer, his marshal, his chamberlain; and, insensibly, as every student of German history knows, the principal officers of state usurped from the other nobles the right of electing the Emperor.

Chivalry was chiefly known in Germany as the embodying of a ferocious spirit of religious persecution. The nation, therefore, embarked in the crusades to the Holy Land, with fierceness, unchecked by chivalric gallantry, and recklessly poured out its best blood in the chase of a phantom. Prussia, and other countries at the north of Germany, were tardy in embracing Christianity; and the sword became the instrument of conversion. The Teutonic knights were particularly active in this pious work, when the Mameluke Tartars had driven them from Palestine. In other countries, the defence of the church, and hostilities against infidels, though considered as knightly duties, were not protruded beyond other obligations; but in Germany, so prominently were they placed, that a cavalier used to hold himself bound, by his general oath of chivalry, to prepare for battle the moment of war being declared, either against infidels or heretics.*

The German knight differed in character from the knight of other countries, though his education was similar. The course of that education is detailed in one of the most interesting German poems, the Das Heldenbuch, or Book of Heroes.

* Sismondi, Hist. des Rep. Ital., vii., 439. The Germans were more observant of the forms than of the spirit of Chivalry. The reader remembers that the spur, the golden spur, was the great mark of knighthood; and every ancient church in this country, or a copy of its antique monumental effigies, will inform him of the custom of placing a spur over or upon a knight's tomb. This was also a custom among the Germans, who, besides, reposited spurs in churches, when age, infirmity, or other causes, unnerved the arm of the knight: moreover, they reposited spurs in churches as memorials of victory. In the fourteenth century five hundred pair of them, which had been taken in a victory over the French, were hung round the walls of the church at Gröningen. Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, page 212.

* Olaus, Hist. Septent., lib. xiv., c. 7.

Digitized by Google

"The princes young, were taught to protect all ladies fair,
Priests they bad them honour, and to the mass repair;
All holy Christian lore were they taught, I plight;
Hughdietrick and his noble queen caused priests to guide them right.

"Bechtung taught them knightly games; on the war horse firm to sit;
To leap, and to defend them; rightly the mark to hit;
Cunningly to give the blow, and to throw the lance afar:
Thence the victory they gain'd, in many a bloody war.

"Right before their breasts to bear the weighty shield,
In battle and in tournament quaintly the sword to wield;
Strongly to lace the helmets on, when call'd to wage the fight,
All to the royal brothers, Bechtung taught aright.

"He taught them o'er the plain for to hurl the weighty rock;
Mighty was their strength, and fearful was the shock:
When o'er the plain resounded the heavy stone aloud,
Six furlongs threw beyond the rest Wolfdieterick the Proud."*

Though the education of the squire in Germany resembled the education of the squire in other countries, yet his state was not equally happy. The duties of the German youth were painful; and, though menial, as, indeed, were many of the duties of all squires, yet they were ungraced by those softening circumstances of manners which distinguished chivalric nurture in France and England.† The squires, too, were more frequently persons of humble birth than of gentle condition; and knighthood, therefore, was not always the reward of their toils. The knights were cruel and severe to their young attendants. It happened once, and the circumstance illustrates the general state of manners, that when a knight was in the midst of a baronial revelling, three of his squires rushed into the hall, with the wild action of fear, and stood trembling before him. He coldly demanded where were the rest. As soon as their fear allowed them to speak, they said that their whole band had been fighting with his enemies, and that eight of them had fallen. Totally unmoved by the fate of his brave and devoted young friends, and thinking only of the rigidness of discipline, he answered, "You are rightly served: who bade you ride without my orders?"* Well, indeed, then, may we say, with the old German authority for this story, that the man who hath held the office of squire has learned what it is to feel the depths of pain and ignominy.

No country was more desolated by private war in the middle ages than Germany; and chivalry, instead of ameliorating the mode of warfare, acquired a character of wildness from the perpetual scene of horror.†

There was no Bertrand du Guesclin, no Black Prince, no Manny, no Chandos, in Germany: there was a rudeness about the knighthood of the Teutonic cavaliers different from its state in other nations. The humanities, which it was the principle of Christian chivalry to throw over the rugged front of war, were but little felt in Germany, though Germany was the very cradle of chivalry. I need not repeat the cruelties which were inflicted upon Richard Cœur de Lion, during his return from the Holy Land. Two centuries afterwards, when chivalry was in its high and palmy state in other countries, the Germans continued uncourteous knights. They were a high and proud people, never admitting foreign cavaliers to companionship and brotherhood. But avarice was their most detestable quality, and effectually extinguished all sentiments of honour. "When a German hath taken a prisoner," says Froissart, "he putteth him into irons, and into hard prison, without any pity, to make him pay the greater finance and ransom."‡ On the probability arising of a war between Germany and France, the French counsellors dissuaded their King, Charles V., from thinking of engaging in it in person, on account of the character of the enemy. It was said, if the King went into Germany, there would be but little chance of his returning. "When they (the Germans) shall

* Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances, p. 76.
† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i., p. 59.

* Ibid., p. 60.
† Ibid., p. 71.
‡ Froissart, vol. i., c. 433.

Digitized by Google

know that the King and all the great nobles of France are entered into their country, they will then assemble all together; and, by their better knowledge of the land, they may do us great damage; for they are a covetous people above all other. They have no pity if they have the upper hand; and they demean themselves with cruelty to their prisoners: they put them to sundry pains, to compel them to make their ransoms the greater; and if they have a lord, or a great man, for their captive, they make great joy thereof, and will convey him into Bohemia, Austria, or Saxony, and keep in some uninhabitable castle. They are people worse than Saracens or Paynims; for their excessive covetousness quencheth the knowledge of honour."*

As the corrective of the violences of feudal licentiousness, no where was chivalry more required, and no where was it less known than in Germany. It is not possible to exaggerate the enormities of the nobility, and, I fear, of the clergy, during all that long tract of time which is called the age of chivalry. Each castle was a den of thieves; and an archbishop thought he had a fair revenue before him, when he built his fortress on the junction of four roads.† To preserve the people from the rapaciousness and cruelty of these noble and clerical robbers, knights-errant sometimes scoured the plain; but this mode of corrective was very imperfectly applied. It was in the cities and towns, which were protected by the emperors, that the oppressed and injured people found refuge. While the German historians seldom mention the protecting influence of knight-errantry, they constantly represent the benefit of towns, and press the fact upon the readers, that it was the tyranny of the nobles which occasioned their growth. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were confederacies among towns, and confederacies among the nobility: the former associations were formed in order to repel the aggressions of the latter. This is a feature in German history totally unknown to other countries of the great republic of Europe, and distinct from all chivalric origin or chivalric effects.

Except in the occasional adventurousness of knights-errant, chivalry was but once concerned in repressing the evils of the time, and interwoven with the interesting circumstances of that occasion is one of the most amusing stories in all the long annals of knighthood. The citizens, in conveying their merchandizes from one place to another, suffered dreadfully from the rapine of the barons; and finding the weapons used by common people were an insufficient protection, they wisely and boldly armed themselves in the manner of their enemies. They wielded the lance and sword, rode the heavy war-horse, practised tournaments and other martial games, and even attended tournaments in castles and courts; assuming for the occasion the armorial distinctions of noble families who were distant from the scene. So much did this state of citizenship resemble that of knighthood, that all the castles on the Rhine were not inhabited by barons and knights only.

In the fourteenth century, a band of bold and wealthy burghers established themselves with their wives and children in one of the largest of these fortresses, as a barrier against the maraudings of the nobility. They became so powerful, and their deportment was so chivalric, that some of the neighbouring knights formed alliances with them. A potent baron harassed them in various ways; and after various battles, each party was willing that words, and not the sword, should terminate the war. They accordingly met on a spot of border-land, and, after arranging the immediate subject of dispute, they embraced as brothers in chivalry. While these citizen-knights were absent, the women, who remained behind, joyfully assembled on a sunny plain, which spread itself before the castle. They walked up and down, each lady praising the martial qualities of her lord. As the discourse proceeded, they became inspired with that heroic courage which they were commending, till at length they ordered the war-horses to be brought out with armour and weapons, resolving to hold a tournament. They

* Froissart, liv. ii., c. 125.
† Schmidt, iv., 492.

Digitized by Google

were soon mounted and armed, and they took the names of their husbands. There was a maiden among them, and as modesty forbad her to take the name of any man of her own station in life, she chose the title of a neighbouring duke. She performed the martial exercises with such strength and adroitness, that most of the married women were cast by her from their saddles, and paid dearly, by their wounds, for their temerity and adventurousness. They then left the plain, and such of them as were injured retired to their chambers, strictly charging the servants and pages to make no disclosure of what had passed. When the knights returned, and found the horses covered with foam and dust, and few ladies to greet them, they inquired the cause of this unwonted appearance. For a while no answer could be gained; but at length they terrified a boy into a detail of the story. They laughed right merrily at the folly of their wives; and when, soon afterwards, they met some of the Rhenish knights at a festival, they made the hall echo with the tale, and it was soon bruited over all Germany. The duke, under whose name the honours of the tournament had been won, was surprised and pleased with the heroism of the maiden. He sought her out, gave her rich presents, not only in money, but a war-steed and a gentle palfrey, and united her in honourable marriage to a wealthy burgher.*

In the character of the emperors of Germany, as seen in their public lives, little of the chivalric nature can be marked. The Fredericks and the Othos more nearly resemble our Norman Williams, than our Plantagenet Edwards. It is singular that the only chivalric emperor in Germany was the prince in whose reign German chivalry expired. Maximilian I. was educated in the strictest discipline of chivalry. All his youthful studies and occupations had relation to his chivalric deportment; and German writers have been fond of remarking, that while he was a mere child, he and another boy were wont to ride on men's backs, and fight with wooden swords in imitation of a joust.†

He was afterwards a very gallant cavalier. When in the year 1495, he was holding his states at Worms, a French knight, named Claude de Batre, arrived at the city, and proclaimed by his herald that he was ready to meet in combat any German knight who was willing to stake life, limb, or liberty, or contend for any knightly distinction in a personal encounter. Among the nobles and knights that were present, no one seemed willing to accept the challenge; for, besides the report of the Frenchman's gigantic strength, fame had armed him with supernatural and satanic powers. The courageous Maximilian could not endure to see the German chivalry braved and bearded by a stranger, and he sent a herald with his own shield, ornamented with the arms of Austria and Burgundy, to lay it along side that of the Frenchman. The emperor and the knight then agreed that on the morning of the tenth day from that time they would appear in public, armed, and fight to the utterance. The person of the conquered was to remain at the victor's disposal. The joust was regarded as a matter of more interest and importance than the public affairs which the Diet was assembled to arrange. On the appointed morning, all the brave and all the fair of Germany, met round the splendid lists which the emperor had erected for the purpose. The herald's trumpet centered the attention of the spectators, — its second flourish hushed every murmur, — and when its third and loudest blast sounded, Maximilian and Claude de Batre pricked forwards at speed through opposite gates into the lists, and opposed lance to lance. Their weapons splintered, and they drew their swords. The fight was long and obstinate; but the skill of the French knight only served to exalt the heroism of the emperor: for, finally, Maximilian disarmed his antagonist, and proved the excellence of the German chivalry.*

It was Frederick III., the father of Maximilian, who gave the first blow to the ancient chivalry of Germany. He passed an edict allowing citizens to receive knighthood; a permission which tarnished the splendour of the order, and disgusted the old cavaliers.† This mea-

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, p. 108.
† Ibid., vol. i., p. 7.

* Ibid., vol. ii., p. 61.
† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. ii., p. 272.

Digitized by Google

sure was a fatal one; for Germany above all other countries had been jealous of the pure nobility of its knighthood. Knighthood was more the adjunct of rank than the reward of merit; and the Germans were more solicitous to examine the quarters of a shield than the martial deserts of the bearer, more desirous to mark his ancestors' deeds than his own. The edict of Frederick destroyed the pride of chivalry. Knighthood was then conferred on boys who were scarcely able to perform the duties of squires, and on children at the baptismal font. But, in truth, the destruction of knighthood in Germany was no real evil. Chivalry had not been a perfect defence of the empire, as the Austrians and Swabians had found in their contests with the Hungarians.

On one occasion, in particular, during the thirteenth century, the knights and squires of Germany were sorely galled on the plains of Hungary by the arrows of the enemy, and vainly wished for a close and personal encounter. An Austrian archer advised the chivalry with whom he served to retreat, and draw the Hungarians far from their homes. This counsel the knights and squires, from pride and suspicion of the man's fidelity, rejected; but the danger pressed, the showers of arrows became thicker and more frequent, and the Austrian and Swabian horses being but partially barded, were either slain or rendered unmanageable. Each knight watched the countenance of his companion, to read in it hope or advice, till at length one of them exclaimed, "Let us send a messenger to these dastardly foes inviting them to peace, or to a manly and chivalric contest, for honour and love of ladies." A squire was despatched, but was shot by a Hungarian arrow. The Austrian leader then called to his side a well-experienced knight, and bade him ride to the Hungarian General, and invoke him by his chivalry to terminate this unknightly conflict. The old warrior replied, that if he were to carry such a message, the Hungarian would infallibly answer, that he was not such a fool as to place his unharnessed men in a level and equal line against the mail-clad chivalry of Austria; and that if the Austrians would doff their armour, the Hungarians would fight them hand to hand.

The danger became more and more imminent, and the Germans had no hope of escape; for they could not expect, as if they had been fighting with the chivalry of France, that a surrender of their horses and arms, and an honourable treaty for their own person's ransom, would satisfy the foe. Finally, they were compelled to yield at discretion; and it is interesting to observe, that the Austrian archer, whose counsel had been despised, and who it appears might have saved himself if he would, remained at his station, and nobly shared the fate of his lords. Instead of meeting with any knightly courtesy, the whole were led away into Hungary, and pined out their days in prison.*

Many other instances of the inefficacy of the German chivalry might be adduced, but the truth is so apparent on every page of the history of Germany, that no particular instances are necessary. Other circumstances contributed to its fall. The privileges of knighthood had been found inconvenient by the emperors. In the field of battle the cavaliers often claimed an independence which was detrimental to imperial authority. Maximilian I., therefore, introduced mercenaries into his army. Such of them as were natives of other countries brought with them every well-practised species of war, and raised the German military power to a level with that of the other nations of Europe. The inadequacy of the German chivalry to the present times was therefore so apparent, that no person wished to see the spirit of knighthood revived. Chivalry ceased to be a national characteristic, and its badges and honours passed into the court to become the signs of imperial favour.†

We will now cross the Alps into

ITALY.

We shall ascend sufficiently high into the antiquities of nations, if we observe that the system of manners from which

* Ottokar v. Hornek, c. 268, &c., in his Annals of Austria.

† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. ii., last chapter.

Digitized by Google

chivalry sprang was brought by the Lombards from Germany into the north of Italy. With them in their new, as it had been in their original, seats, the title to bear arms was a distinction conferred by the state, and not a subject of private will and choice. A son did not presume to sit at the same table with his father. For the instruction of youth in military affairs there were public spectacles on Sundays, and on festivals, in imitation of a knightly mêlée. A town or city was divided into two parts, each having its defenders. The mock battles were either general or between small parties, the weapons were made of wood, the helmets were safely padded, and the young warriors displayed splendid banners adorned with fanciful cognisances.* The amusement of hawking, which distinguished the Gothic from the Latin and most southern tribes, was common with the Lombards:† but more than all the rest, a tone of chivalric gallantry was given to the Italians, even by these long-bearded barbarians.

Antharis, one of the Lombard kings, sought in marriage Theudelinda, a daughter of the King of Bavaria; and not wishing to judge through another's eyes, he disguised himself as a private man, and accompanied his ambassadors to the Bavarian court. After the conditions of the marriage had been discussed and the ceremonies arranged, the disguised prince stepped before the crowd, and, saluting the King, declared that he was the personal friend of Antharis, who wished to receive from him a description of the lady's charms. Theudelinda accordingly appeared, and the first glance assured Antharis of her being worthy of his love. He did not betray his rank to the assembly; but not altogether able to conceal his joy, he touched the hand of the royal damsel as she presented him a cup of wine; and the matrons about the court, excellent judges of signs of passion, whispered their assurance that such an act of bold familiarity could never have been committed by a mere public or personal representative of Antharis.‡

For several centuries chivalry shed but few and transient gleams of light over the gloomy waste of Italian history, and I can only select one event which paints in beautiful colours the spirit of romantic gallantry. The wife of Lothaire, King of Italy from the year 945 to 948, was Adelais, a princess of the house of Burgundy. Lothaire was deposed, perhaps murdered by his minister, Berenger; and the usurper persecuted, with the cruelty of fear, Adelais, who has been described by monkish chroniclers, and chivalry will not contradict the character, as being young and beautiful. He confined her in a subterraneous dungeon; and, as if personal insult was his best security, he deprived her of her jewels and her royal apparel. A female servant was her only companion during four months of confinement, wherein she was made to endure every mortification which a noble mind can be exposed to. Her wretched condition was at length discovered by a priest, named Martin, who had not in the retirement of a cloister lost the sympathies of humanity. He immediately employed himself to effect her rescue, and, unseen by her jealous keepers, he worked an aperture through the earth and walls sufficient to admit a slender female form to pass. He conveyed male habiliments into the dungeon, to deceive the eyes of her jailors, and, apparelled in them, Adelais and her attendant made their escape. They were met at the entrance of the aperture by their faithful monk, who fled with them to the most probable place of safety, a wood near the lake Benacus. The wants of nature were furnished to them by a poor man who gained a precarious livelihood by fishing in the lake. Recovered from their fatigue and alarm, Martin left the wood to provide for his fair friend some surer place of safety. He went to the Bishop of Reggio, who, though a humane and well-purposed man, was unable to oppose the might of Berenger. Still the matter was not hopeless, for he remembered that there was dwelling in the impregnable fortress of Canossa a virtuous and adventurous knight. To him, therefore, Martin addressed himself, and Azzo listened to his complaint. He and a chosen band of cavaliers donned their harness, and, repairing to the lake Benacus, conducted thence the persecuted Adelais to the fortress of Canossa. And this was well

* Muratori, Dissert. 29. † Ibid., 23.
‡ Giannone, lib. i.

Digitized by Google

and chivalrously achieved, for virtue was protected; and in affording this protection, Azzo defied the power of the King of Italy. The subsequent fate of Adelais it falls not within my province to detail. The student of Italian history knows that she married Otho the Great, Emperor of Germany, and that this marriage was a main cause of uniting the sovereignties of Germany and Italy.*

The growth and development of chivalry in subsequent times were checked by political circumstances. Of them the chief was the formation of the republics in the north of Italy during the twelfth century. The power of the feudal nobility was far less than in any other country, and the nobles were the humble allies of the towns.† The citizens trusted rather to the security of their fortifications than their own strength in the field, for their infantry could not resist the charges of the Italian cavalry; and, except such nobles as were in alliance with them, their force consisted of infantry. The superiority of the chivalric array of the various lords and feudal princes of Italy to the militia of the cities‡ was one great cause of that great political revolution—the change of the republics into tyrannies. The power of knights over armed burghers having been experienced, and the town not possessing in sufficient numbers a force of cavalry, the practice arose of hiring the service of bodies of lancers, who were commonly gentlemen of small fortune, but of great pretensions, and who found war the readiest way of gratifying their proud and luxurious desires. In the fourteenth century another great change occurred in the military affairs of Italy. I shall lay it before my readers in the lucid diction of the English historian of that country. "The successive expeditions of Henry VII., of Louis of Bavaria, and of John of Bohemia, had filled Italy with numerous bands of German cavalry, who, on the retirement of their sovereigns, were easily tempted to remain in a rich and beautiful country, where their services were eagerly demanded and extravagantly paid. The revolution in the military art, which in the preceding century established the resistless superiority of a mounted gens-d'armerie over the burgher infantry, had habituated every state to confide its security to bodies of mercenary cavalry; and the Lombard tyrants in particular, who founded their power upon these forces, were quick in discovering the advantage of employing foreign adventurers, who were connected with their disaffected subjects by no ties of country or community of language. Their example was soon universally followed, native cavalry fell into strange disrepute; and the Italians, without having been conquered in the field, unaccountably surrendered the decision of their quarrels, and the superiority in courage and military skill, to mercenaries of other countries. When this custom of employing foreign troops was once introduced, new swarms of adventurers were continually attracted from beyond the Alps to reap the rich harvest of pay and booty which were spread before them. In a country so perpetually agitated by wars among its numerous states, they found constant occupation, and, what they loved more, unbridled license. Ranging themselves under the standards of chosen leaders—the condottieri, or captains of mercenary bands—they passed in bodies of various strength from one service to another, as their terms of engagement expired, or the temptation of higher pay invited; their chieftains and themselves alike indifferent to the cause which they supported; alike faithless, rapacious, and insolent. Upon every trifling disgust they were ready to go over to the enemy: their avarice and treachery were rarely proof against seduction; and, though their regular pay was five or six times greater

* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, vol. v., part 2, p. 171, &c. Even the Modenese librarian throws aside his dust and parchments, and warms himself into a humanised being at this story; while Sismondi passes it over with frigid indifference.

† Muratori, Dissert. 49.

‡ See in the twenty-seventh Dissertation of Muratori (Della Milizia de secoli rozzi in Italia) for a minute account of the armour of these different classes. I observe that Mr. Perceval, in his History of Italy, vol. i., p. 197, holds a different opinion from which I have expressed in the text. Instead of thinking that the change in the military art formed one of the causes which hastened the overthrow of the Lombard liberties, he contends that, perhaps, it might be more correctly numbered among the circumstances which, after that overthrow had been accomplished, perpetuated the work of slavery.

Digitized by Google

in the money of the age than that of modern armies, they exacted a large gratuity for every success. As they were usually opposed by troops of the same description, whom they regarded rather as comrades than enemies, they fought with little earnestness, and designedly protracted their languid operations to ensure the continuance of their emoluments. But while they occasioned each other little loss, they afflicted the country which was the theatre of contest with every horror of warfare: they pillaged, they burnt, they violated, and massacred with devilish ferocity."*

Gradually these foreign condottieri, when not engaged in the service of any particular power, levied war like independent sovereigns; and Italy had fresh reason to repent the jealousy which had made her distrust her own sons. They fought with tenfold more fury now that the contest was no longer carried on by one troop of condottieri against another, but against the Italians themselves, to whom no tie of nature bound them; and so far was any cavaleresque generosity from mitigating the horrors of their wars, that one adventurer, Werner was his name, and Germany his country, declared, by an inscription which was blazoned on his corslet, that he was "the enemy of God, of pity, and of mercy." But the power of these foreign condottieri was not perpetual. Nature rose to vindicate her rights; and there were many daring spirits among the Italians, who, if not emulous of the fame, were jealous of the dominion, of strangers. The company of Saint George, founded by Alberico de Barbiano, a marauding chief of Romagna, was the school of Italian generals. In the fifteenth century, the force of every state was led by an Italian, if not a native citizen; and when the Emperor Robert crossed the Alps with the gens-d'armerie of Germany, the Milanese, headed by Jacopo del Verme, encountered him near Brescia, and overthrew all his chivalry.

In northern Italy no knightlike humanities softened the vindictiveness of the Italian mind. Warriors never admitted prisoners to ransom. The annals of their contests are destitute of those graceful courtesies which shed such a beautiful lustre over the contests of England and France. No cavalier ever thought of combating for his lady's sake, and a lady's favour was never blended with his heraldic insignia. There were no regular defiances to war as in other countries: honour, that animating principle of chivalry, was not known; the object of the conquest was regarded to the exclusion of fame and military distinction. Stratagems were as common as open and glorious battle; and private injuries were revenged by assassination, and not by the fair and manly joust à l'outrance: and yet when a man pledged his word for the performance of any act, and wished his sincerity to be believed, he always swore by the parola di cavaliere, e non di cortigiano; so general and forcible was the acknowledgment of chivalry's moral superiority. I know nothing in the history of the middle ages more dark with crime than the wars of the Italians—nothing that displays by contrast more beautifully the graces of chivalry; and yet the Italian condottieri were brave to the very height of valour. Before them the German chivalry quailed, as it had formerly done before the militia of the towns.

In the deep feelings and ardent and susceptible imaginations of the Italians, chivalry, it might seem, could have raised her fairest triumph; but chivalry had no fellowship with a mercenary spirit, and sordid gain was the only motive of the Italian soldiers. Their acute and intelligent minds preceded most other people in military inventions. To them, in particular, is to be attributed the introduction of the long and pointed sword, against which the hauberk, or coat of mail, was no protection. They took the lead in giving the tone to military costume: they were the most ingenious people of Europe during the middle ages: and their superior skill in the mechanical arts was every where acknowledged. The reader of English history may remember, that in the reign of Richard II. the Earl of Derby, afterwards Henry IV., sent to Milan for his armour, on account of his approaching combat with Thomas, Duke of Norfolk. Sir Galeas, Duke of Milan,

* Perceval's History of Italy, vol. i., chap. 5, part 1.

Digitized by Google

not only gave the messenger the best in his collection, but allowed four Milanese armourers to accompany him to England, in order that the Earl might be properly and completely accomplished. The Milanese armour preserved its reputation even in times when other countries had acquired some skill in the mechanical arts. In 1481 the Duke of Brittany purchased various cuirasses at Milan; and in the accounts of jousts and tournaments frequent mention is made of the superior temper and beauty of Italian harness.*

In the south of Italy chivalry had a longer and brighter reign. Some of its customs were introduced by the Lombards when they established their kingdom at Beneventum; and others were planted by the Normans, that people of chivalric adventurousness. Knighthood was an order of the state of high consideration, and much coveted; but its glories were sometimes tarnished by the admission of unworthy members; and, in the year 1252, the Emperor Frederick II. was obliged to issue a decree, at Naples, forbidding any one to receive it who was not of gentle birth.

The most complete impression, however, of the chivalric character, on the minds of the Italians, was made by the house of Anjou, when Charles and his Frenchmen conquered Naples in 1266. The south of Italy seems to have been far less advanced in civilization than the commercial towns of the north; but the Angevine monarchs made Naples one blaze of splendid luxury. Nothing had been seen in Italy so brilliant as the cavalcade of Charles. The golden collars of the French lords, — the surcoats and pennons, and plumed steeds of the knights, — the carriage of the Queen, covered with blue velvet, and ornamented with golden lilies, — surpassed in magnificence all former shows.† The entry of Charles was a festival; and on that occasion the honour of knighthood was conferred on all persons who solicited it. The kings of the house of Anjou pretended to revive the regulations of Frederick II.; but they soon relaxed them, and gave the military girdle to the commonalty who could not prove that their forefathers had been knights.

When a person was invested at Naples, the bishop, or other ecclesiastic who assisted at the inauguration, not only commanded the recipient to defend the church, and regard the usual obligations of chivalry, but he exhorted him not to rise in arms against the King from any motive, or under any circumstances. This curious clause was added to the exhortation: "If you should be disloyal to your sovereign, to him who is going to make you a knight, you ought first to return him the girdle with which you are immediately to be honoured; and then you may make war against him, and none will reproach you with treachery; otherwise, you will be reputed infamous, and worthy of death." An instance of the fear of this imputation of treachery occurred when the Princes of Besignano and Melfi, the Duke of Atri, and the Count of Maddolini, returned to Louis XII., King of France, the collar of St. Michael (with which he had honoured them), when Ferdinand the Catholic took possession of the kingdom.*

Knighthood was much solicited on account of its privileges, as well as of its titular distinction. It exempted the fortunate wearer from the payment of taxes, and gave him the power of enjoying the royal and noble amusement of the chase. But the Angevine monarchs were so prodigal in granting the honour of knighthood, that it ceased to be a distinction; and in the reign of the last princes of that house the order had degenerated into a vain and empty title.

Such was the general state of chivalry in northern and southern Italy; but there were some circumstances common to every part of the peninsula. The nobility invested each other with festive and religious ceremonies, with the bath,† the watching of arms, and the sacred and

* Monstrelet, vol. xi., p. 328.

† Muratori, Dissert. 23. Muratori describes from a contemporary chronicle the entrance of Charles. The carriage of the Queen seems to have excited great astonishment, as carriages were in those days seldom used by ladies, and seldomer by men.

* Giannone, Istoria Civile di Napoli, lib. xx., c. 3, s. 1.

† When that political coxcomb, Cola de Rienzi, thought fit to be knighted, he would not bathe in the ordinary way, but made use of the vase wherein, according to the tradition, Constantine had been baptized. Vita di Cola Rienzi, c. 25.

Digitized by Google

military shows, or with a simple stroke of a sword, and the exhortation, "Sii un valoroso cavaliere," two ancient knights buckling on his golden spurs. In the year 1294, Azzo, Marquis of Este, was knighted by Gerard, Lord of Camino, at a public solemnity held at Ferrara. Cane, Lord of Verona, in 1328, gave the honour of knighthood to thirty-eight young nobles, and presented them with golden belts, and beautiful war-horses.* In Italy there was the usual array of knights and squires, of cavalieri and scudieri; but I can find no mention of pages distinct from the squires, and attending their lords; except, indeed, they were the domicelli, or donzelli, who, however, are supposed by Muratori to have been the squires of noble rank. All the armour-bearers of the knights were not noble or of gentle birth, or we should not very often meet, in the Italian annalists of the middle ages, the expression "honourable squires."

In the fourteenth century knights had four titles, agreeably to the various modes of their creation:—Cavalieri Bagnati, or Knights of the Bath, who were made with the grandest ceremonies, and supposed, from their immersion, to be freed from all vice and impurity; the Cavalieri di Corredo, or those who were invested with a deep green dress, and a golden garland; the Cavalieri di Scudo, or those who were created either by people or nobility; and the Cavalieri d'Arme were those who were made either before or during battle.†

Many orders of knighthood were known in Italy: some (but their history is not interesting) were peculiar to it; and others, such as the order of the knights of Saint John and of the Temple, had their preceptories and commanderies in that country. And, to enlarge upon a circumstance alluded to in another place, it is curious to notice the dexterity with which chivalry accommodated itself to the manners and usages of any particular society. The commercial cities in the north of Italy vied in power with, and were superior in wealth to, the feudal nobility. Chivalry was esteemed as a graceful decoration by every class of men, and by none with more ardour than by new families, whom opulence had raised into civic consideration. The strictness of the principles of knighthood opposed their investiture; but those principles were made to give way; and commercial pride was satisfied with the concession of aristocratical haughtiness, that the *sons* of men in trade might become brothers of the orders of chivalry.

The decoration of simple knighthood, however, was given indiscriminately without regard to birth or station. Every city assumed the power of bestowing it; and after a great battle it was showered with indiscriminate profusion upon those who had displayed their courage, whether they were armed burghers or condottieri. And this was a wise measure of the Italian cities: for there was always an obligation expressed or implied on the part of knights of fidelity to the person from whom they received the honour.* It is amusing to observe, that, in the year 1378, a Florentine mob paused in its work of murder and rapine to play with the graceful ensigns of chivalry: and, in imitation of the power of the city, they insisted on investing their favourites with knighthood.

Chivalry had, perhaps, greater influence on the literature and manners of the Italians than on their military usages. Wandering minstrels from France and Spain chanted in the streets of Italy tales of warriors' deeds and lady-love, particularly the stories of Roland and Oliver, the paladins of Charlemagne, who were also the subject of song and recitation, even by the stage players on the earliest theatre at Milan.† Much of the popular literature of Italy consisted of romances; and the chief topics of them were the exploits both in arms and amours of Charlemagne and his paladins: though on one occasion Buovo d'Antina, a hero of chivalry, who fought and loved prior to the time of those heroes, was the theme of Tuscan verse. The wars of Charlemagne and his paladins with the Saracens were afterwards sung by the nobler muse of Pulci and Boiardo, and

* Muratori, Dissert. 29, 53.
† Sacchetti, Novelle, c. 153.

* Muratori, Dissert. 53. Thus, when Hildebrand Guatasca, in 1260, was made a knight at the expense of the city of Arezzo, he swore fidelity to his lord, or, as grammarians would have it, his lady, the good city that had knighted him.
† Muratori, Dissert., vol. ii., c. 29, p. 16.

Digitized by Google

then by Ariosto, who, not confining himself to the common stores of romantic fiction, has borrowed as freely from the tales regarding Arthur and the British and Armoric knights as from those relating to Charlemagne and the peers of France, and has thrown over the whole the graceful mantle of Oriental sorcery. The chivalric duties of converting the heathen, of adoring the ladies, of fighting in the cause of heaven and women, were thus presented to the minds of the Italians; and the Homer of Ferrara roused the courage, or softened into love or pity, the hearts of knights and ladies, by singing the wars and loves of days which his poetry rendered bright and golden.

These were the literary amusements of Italy; the subjects of recitation in the baronial hall, and of solitary perusal in the lady's bower; with these works the Italians nourished their imaginations; and a chivalric taste was diffused over the manners of public and private life. The amusement of hawking, which, as we have seen, the fathers of chivalric Italy had introduced, was indulged in at every court; and the Ferrarese princes were generally attended in the field by a hundred falconers, so proud and magnificent was their display. Every great event was celebrated by a tournament or a triumphal show. Dante speaks of the tournament as the familiar amusement of the fourteenth century.

> ——— "E vidi gir gualdane,
> Ferir torniamenti, e correr giostra."
> Inferno, c. 22.

So early as the year 1166, on occasion of the interview between Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander at Venice, chivalric and civic pomp celebrated their friendship. Two centuries afterwards, the recovery of Cyprus presented a fair opportunity for military display. Knights flocked to Venice from England, France, and every country of the West, and manifested their prowess in the elegant, yet perilous, encounter of the tournament. There was a pageant, or grand triumphal show, of a splendid procession of knights cased in steel, and adorned with the favours of the ladies. The scene-painter and the machinist combined their talents to give an allegorical representation of the Christian's victory over Islamism: the knights moved amidst the scenic decorations, and by their gallant bearing swelled with noble pride the hearts of the spectators.

The sports of chivalry were so elegant and graceful that we might have supposed the refined Italians would have embraced them in all their circumstances. But the arena of the Coliseum, so admirably adapted for a tournament, was used for Moorish games. The matrons and virgins of Rome, arrayed in all their bravery, were seated in its ample galleries, and beheld, not a gallant and hurtless encounter between two parties of knights with lances of courtesy, but a succession of sanguinary conflicts between cavaliers and bulls. Only one solitary circumstance gave an air of chivalry to the scene, and prevents us from mingling the bull-feast of the Coliseum on the 1st of September, 1332, with the horrid spectacles of classic times. Each knight wore a device, and fancied himself informed by the spirit of chivalry, and the presence of the ladies. "I burn under the ashes," was the motto of him who had never told his passion. "I adore Lavinia, or Lucretia," was written on the shield of the knight who wished to be thought the servant of love, and yet dared not avow the real name of his mistress.*

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE MERITS AND EFFECTS OF CHIVALRY.

We are now arrived at that part of our subject where we may say with the poet,

> "The knights are dust,
> And their good swords are rust:
> Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

With Italy the historical tracing ceases of that system of principles which for so many centuries formed or influenced the character of Europe. Its rude beginnings may be marked in the patriarchal manners which preceded

* Muratori, Scriptores Rerum Italicarum, vol. xii., p. 535.

Digitized by Google

every known frame of artificial life, and have been shaped and modified by the legislator and moralist. The ties of fraternity or companionship in arms, respect to elders, devotion to women, military education and military investiture, were the few and simple elements of chivalry, and in other times would have formed the foundation of other systems of manners. But a new and mighty spirit was now influencing the world, and bending to its purposes every principle and affection. Christianity, with its sanctities and humanities, gave a form and character to chivalry. He who was invested with the military belt, was no longer the mere soldier of ambition and rapine, but he was taught to couch his lance for objects of defence and protection, rather than for those of hostility. He was the friend of the distressed, of widows and orphans, and of all who suffered from tyranny and oppression. The doctrine of Christian benevolence, that all who name the name of Christ are brothers, gave beauty and grace to the principles of fraternity, which were the Gothic inheritance of knights, and therefore the wars of the middle ages were distinguished for their humanities. A cavalier was kind and courteous to his prisoner, because he saw in him a brother; and while the system of ancient manners would have limited this feeling to people of one nation, a knight did not bound his humanity by country or soil, for Christian chivalry was spread over most parts of Europe, and formed mankind into one band, one order of men. From the same principle all the courtesies of private life were communicated to strangers; and gentleness of manners, and readiness of service, expanded from a private distinction into a universal character. Since, by the Christian religion, women was restored to the rank in the moral world which nature had originally assigned her, the feelings of respect for the sex, which were entertained in the early and unsophisticated state of Europe, were heightened by the new sanctions of piety. It was a principle as well as a feeling and a love, to guard and cherish woman; and many of the amenities of chivalry proceeded from her mild influence and example.

The patriarchal system of manners, shaped and sanctioned by Christianity, formed the fabric of chivalry; and romance, with its many-coloured hues, gave it light and beauty. The early ages of Europe gaily moved in all the wildness and vigour of youth; imagination freshened and heightened every pleasure; the world was a vision, and life a dream. The common and palpable value of an object was never looked at, but every thing was viewed in its connexion with fancy and sentiment. Prudence and calculation were not suffered to check noble aspirations: army after army traversed countries, and crossed the sea to the Holy Land, reckless of pain or danger: duties were not cautiously regarded with a view to limit the performance of them; for every principle was not only practised with zeal, but the same fervid wish to do well lent it new obligations. From these feelings proceeded all the graceful refinements, all the romance of chivalry; knighthood itself became a pledge for virtue; and as into the proud and lofty imagination of a true cavalier nothing base could enter, he did not hesitate to confide in the word of his brother of chivalry, on his pledging his honour to the performance of any particular action. There was no legal or other positive punishment consequent on the violation of his word; and, therefore, the matter being left to imagination and feeling, the contempt of his fellow-knights could be the only result of recreancy. The knight looked to fame as one of the guerdons of his toils: this value of the opinions of others taught him to dread shame and disgrace; and thus that fine sense of morality, that voluntary submission to its maxims which we call honour, became a part of knighthood.

The genius of chivalry was personal, inasmuch as each knight, when not following the banner of his sovereign, was in himself an independent being, acting from his own sense of virtue, and not deriving counsel from, or sharing opprobrium with, others. This independence of action exalted his character; and, nourished by that pride and energy of soul which belong to man in an early state of society, all the higher and sterner qualities of the mind, — dignity, uncom-

Digitized by Google

promising fidelity to obligations, self-denial, and generousness, both of sentiment and conduct, — became the virtues of chivalry.

All the religious devotion of a cavalier to woman existed in his mind, independently of, or superadded to, his oath of knighthood. She was not merely the object of his protection, but of his respect and idolatry. His love was the noble homage of strength to beauty. Something supernaturally powerful had been ascribed to her by the fathers of modern Europe; and this appeal to the imagination was not lost. In some ages and countries it reigned in all its religious force; in others it was refined into gentleness and courtesy: but every where, and at every time, the firmest confidence in woman's truth accompanied it, or supplied its stead; and the opinion of her virtue, which this feeling implied, had a corresponding influence on his own manners.

The triumph of chivalry over all preceding systems of opinions was complete, when imagination refined the fierceness of passion into generous and gentle affection, — a refinement so perfect and beautiful, that subsequent times, with all their vaunted improvements in letters and civilization, are obliged to revert their eyes to the by-gone days of the shield and the lance for the most pleasing and graceful pictures of lady-love.

From these elements, and by means of these principles, sprang the fair and goodly system of chivalry, which extended itself, as we have seen, over most of the states of Europe, blending with the strongest passions and dearest affections of the heart, influencing the manners of private life, and often determining the character of political events. In England and France its power was most marked and decided; in Spain it was curiously blended with Oriental feelings; Germany was not much softened by its impressions; and in Italy the bitterness of private war admitted but few of its graces. It is difficult to define the precise period of its duration, for it rose in the mists and gloom of barbarism; and the moment of its setting was not regarded, for other lights were then playing on the moral horizon, and fixing the attention of the world. In the part, entirely historical, of the present work, the reader must have remarked, that sometimes the decay of chivalry was gradual, and not apparently occasioned by external means; while in other countries its extinction was manifestly hastened by causes which sprang not from any seeds of weakness in itself. But, viewing the subject in its great and leading bearings, it may be observed, that chivalry was co-eval with the middle ages of Europe, and that its power ceased when new systems of warfare were matured, when the revival of letters was complete and general, and the reformation of religion gave a new subject for the passions and imagination.

This attempt to describe a history of chivalry has proved, at least, that chivalry was no dream of poets and romancers, and that the feudal system was not the only form of real life during the middle ages. Sismondi, in his work on the Literature of the South, contends that chivalry was an ideal world. He then admits, that sometimes the virtues of chivalry were not entirely poetical fictions, but that they existed in the minds of the people, without, however, producing any effect on their lives. His reasons for his opinions are, that it is impossible to distinguish the countries where chivalry prevailed; that it is represented to us as remote both in time and place; and while one class of authors give accounts of the general corruption of their age, writers of after times refer to those very days, and adorn them with every virtue and grace.

Now, much of this reasoning is erroneous. That past ages should be praised at the expense of the present is no uncommon a circumstance, whether in morals or poetry. We have proved that the countries where chivalry prevailed are clearly distinguishable, and the degree of its influence can likewise be marked. M. Sismondi does not argue if he had been aware that there ever had existed such a writer as Froissart; who does not refer to old times for his pictures of arms and amours, but describes the chivalric character of his own age.

Notwithstanding the light and beauty which chivalry cast over the world, the system has been more frequently con-

Digitized by Google

demned than praised. The objectors have rested their opinion on a sentence, said to be witty, of an old English author, that errant knights were arrant knaves, or on a few passages of reprehension which are scattered through the works of middle-age literature. Sainte Palaye has founded his condemnation of chivalry upon the remark of Pierre de Blois, a writer of the twelfth century, that the horses of knights groan under the burden, not of weapons, but of wine; not with lances, but cheeses; not with swords, but with bottles; not with spears, but with spits.* Not many years afterwards, John of Salisbury also says, that some knights appear to think that martial glory consists in shining in elegant dress, and attaching their silken garments so tightly to their body, that they may seem part of their flesh. When they ride on their ambling palfreys they think themselves so many Apollos. If they should unite for a martial chevisance, their camp will resemble that of Thais, rather than that of Hannibal. Every one is most courageous in the banqueting hall, but in the battle he desires to be last. They would rather shoot their arrows at an enemy than meet him hand to hand. If they return home unwounded, they sing triumphantly of their battles, and declare that a thousand deaths hovered over them. The first places at supper are awarded to them. Their feasts are splendid, and engrossed by self-indulgence; they avoid labour and exercise like a dog or a snake. All the dangers and difficulties of chivalry they resign to those who serve them, and in the mean time they so richly gild their shields, and adorn their camps, that every one of them looks not a scholar but a chieftain of war.†

All this splenetic declamation involves charges of coxcombry, luxury, and cowardice. That knights were often guilty of the first offence is probable enough, for all their minute attention to the form and fashion of armour could not but attach their minds too strongly to the effect of their personal appearance. Graced also with the scarf of his sovereign mistress, the knight well might caracole his gallant steed with an air of self-complacency: but a censure on such matters comes with little propriety from monks, who, according to Chaucer, were wont to tie their hoods under their chin with a true lover's knot.

The personal indulgence of the knights was not the luxury of the cloister, — idle, gross, and selfish, — but it was the high and rich joviality of gay and ardent souls. They were boon or good companions in the hall, as well as in the battle field. If their potations were deep, they surely were not dull; for the wine-cup was crowned and quaffed to the honour of beauty; and minstrelsy, with its sweetest melodies, threw an air of sentiment over the scene. How long their repasts lasted history has not related: but we have seen, in the life of that great and mighty English knight, Sir Walter Manny, that when the trumpet sounded to horse, cavaliers overthrew, in gay disorder, every festival-appliance, in their impatience to don their harness, and mount their war-steeds; and we also saw that a cup of rich Gascon wine softened the pride and anger of Sir John Chandos, and, awakening in him the feelings of chivalric generosity, impelled him to succour the Earl of Pembroke. In sooth, at the festivals of cavaliers all the noble feelings of chivalry were displayed. In those hours of dilatation of the heart, no appeal was made in vain to the principles of knighthood.

Even so late as the year 1462, when the sun of chivalry was nearly set, at a high festival which the Duke of Burgundy gave, at Brussels, to the lords and ladies of the country, two heralds entered the hall, introducing a stranger, who declared that he brought with him letters of credence from the noble lady his mistress. The letters were then delivered by him to the officer of the Duke, who read them aloud. Their purport was, that the lady complained of a certain powerful neighbour, who had threatened to dispossess her of her lands, unless she could find some knight that, within a year, would successfully defend her against him in single combat. The stranger then demanded a boon of the

* Non ferro sed vino; non lanceis sed caseis; non ensibus sed utribus; non hastibus sed verubus onerantur.

† Polycraticus, p. 181.

Digitized by Google

Duke; and his grace, like a true son of chivalry, accorded it, without previously requiring its nature. The request was, that he should procure for the lady three knights, to be immediately trained to arms; that out of these three the lady should be permitted to choose her champion. Then, and not before, she would disclose her name. As soon as the stranger concluded, a burst of joyful approval rang through the hall. Three knights (and the famous Bastard of Burgundy was of the number) immediately declared themselves candidates for the honour of defending the unknown fair. Their prowess was acknowledged by all the cavaliers present, and they affixed their seals to the articles.*

Except the knights were actually engaged in foreign countries, or martial chevisance, all the festivals, particularly those which succeeded the graceful pastime of the tournament, were frequented by dames and damsels, whose presence calling on the knights to discharge the offices of high courtesy, chased away the God of wine. The games of chess and tables, or the dance, succeeded; while the worthy monks, Pierre of Blois, and John of Salisbury, having no such rich delights in their refectory, were compelled to continue their carousals.

How gay and imaginative were the scenes of life when chivalry threw over them her magic robe! At a ball in Naples, Signor Galeazzo of Mantua was honoured with the hand of the Queen Joanna. The dance being concluded, and the Queen reseated on her throne, the gallant knight knelt before her, and, confessing his inability with language adequately to thank her for the honour she had done him, he vowed that he would wander through the world, and perform chivalric duties, till he had conquered two cavaliers, whom he would conduct into her presence, and leave at her disposal. The Queen was pleased and flattered by this mark of homage, and assured him that she wished him joy in accomplishing a vow which was so agreeable to the customs of knighthood. The knight travelled, and the knight conquered; and, at the end of a year, he presented to the Queen two cavaliers. The Queen received them; but, instead of exercising the power of a conqueror, she graciously gave them their liberty, recommending them, before their departure, to view the curiosities of the rich city of Naples. They did so; and when they appeared before the Queen to thank her for her kindness, she made them many noble presents, and they then departed, seeking adventures, and publishing the munificence and courtesy of Joanna.*

But the charge of cowardice which the monks brought against the knights is the most vain and foolish of all their accusations, and throws a strong shade of contempt and suspicion on the rest. If they had said that chivalric daring often ran wild into rashness, we could readily enough credit the possibility of the fact; but nothing could be more absurd than to charge with cowardice men who, from the dauntlessness of their minds, and the hardy firmness of their bodies, had been invested with the military belt.

The reason of all this vituperative declamation against chivalry may be gathered from a very curious passage in a writer during the reign of Stephen. "The bishops, the bishops themselves, I blush to affirm it, yet not all, but many, (and he particularises the bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, and Chester,) bound in iron, and completely furnished with arms, were accustomed to mount war-horses with the perverters of their country, to participate in their prey; to expose to bonds and torture the knights whom they took in the chance of war, or whom they met full of money; and while they themselves were the head and cause of so much wickedness and enormity, they ascribed it to their knights."† Hence, then, it appears that many of the bishops were robbers, and that they charged their own offences on the head of the chivalry. The remark of the writer on the cruelty of the

* Lansdowne Manuscripts, British Museum, No. 285. Article 41. The manuscript breaks off here; but the result of the joust is of no importance to my argument.

* Brantome, Œuvres, les Vies des Dames illustres, vol. i., p. 410, &c. Brantome relates the story on the authority of an old Italian book on Duels, written by one Paris de Puteo.

† Gesta Stephan, p. 962, cited in Turner's England, vol. i., p. 461, 8vo.

Digitized by Google

bishops to their prisoners is extremely curious, considering it in opposition to the general demeanour of knights to those whom the fortune of war threw into their hand. But these wars and jealousies between the knighthood and the priesthood, while they account for all the accusations which one class were perpetually making against the other, compel us to despise their mutual criminations.

Nothing more, perhaps, need be said to deface the pictures of the knightly character as drawn by Pierre de Blois and John of Salisbury; and they should not have met with so much attention from me if they had not always formed the van of every attack upon chivalry. But there is one passage in Dr. Henry's History of England so closely applicable to the present part of my subject, that I cannot forbear from inserting it. "It would not be safe," observes that judicious historian, "to form our notions of the national character of the people of England from the pictures which are drawn of it by some of the monkish historians. The monk of Malmsbury, in particular, who wrote the life of Edward II., paints his countrymen and contemporaries in the blackest colours. 'What advantage,' says he, 'do we reap from all our modern pride and insolence? In our days the lowest, poorest wretch, who is not worth a halfpenny, despises his superiors, and is not afraid to return them curse for curse. But this, you say, is owing to their rusticity. Let us see, then, the behaviour of those who think themselves polite and learned. Where do you meet with more abuse and insolence than at court? There, every one, swelling with pride and rancour, scorns to cast a look on his inferiors, disdains his equals, and proudly rivals his superiors. The squire endeavours to outshine the knight, the knight the baron, the baron the earl, the earl the king, in dress and magnificence. Their estates being insufficient to support this extravagance, they have recourse to the most oppressive acts, plundering their neighbours and stripping their dependents almost naked, without sparing even the priests of God. I may be censured for my too great boldness, if I give an ill character of my own countrymen and kindred; but if I may be permitted to speak the truth, the English exceed all other nations in three vices of pride, perjury, and dishonesty. You will find great numbers of this nation in all the countries washed by the Greek sea; and it is commonly reported that they are infamous over all these countries for their deceitful callings.' But we must remember, (as Dr. Henry comments on this passage,) that this picture was drawn by a *peevish monk*, in very unhappy times, when faction raged with the greatest fury, both in the court and country."

It would not alter the nature of chivalry, or detract any thing from its merits, if many instances were to be adduced of the recreancy of knights, of their want of liberality, courtesy, or any other chivalric qualities; for nothing is more unjust than to condemn any system for actions which are hostile to its very spirit and principles. One fair way of judging it, is to examine its natural tendencies. A character of mildness must have been formed wherever the principles of chivalry were acknowledged. A great object of the order was protection; and therefore a kind and gentle regard to the afflictions and misfortunes of others tempered the fierceness of the warrior. In many points chivalry was only a copy of the Christian religion; and as that religion is divine, and admirably adapted to improve and perfect our moral nature, so the same merit cannot in fairness be denied to any of its forms and modifications. Chivalry embraced much of the beautiful morality of Christianity—its spirit of kindness and gentleness; and men were called upon to practise the laws of mercy and humanity by all the ties which can bind the heart and conscience; by the sanctions of religion, the love of fame, by a powerful and lofty sense of honour. On the other hand, the Christianity of the time was not the pure light of the Gospel, for it breathed war and homicide; and hence the page of history, faithful to its trust, has sometimes painted the knights amidst the gloomy horrors of the crusades, ruthlessly trampling on the enemies of the cross, and at other times generously sparing their prostrate

Digitized by Google

Christian foes, and gaily caracoling about the lists of the tournament.

But these are not the only means of showing the general beneficial nature of the institutions of chivalry. The character of modern Europe is the result of the slow and silent growth of ages informed with various and opposite elements. The impress of the Romans is not entirely effaced; and two thousand years have not destroyed all the superstitions of our Pagan ancestors. We must refer to past ages for the origin of many of those features of modern society which distinguish the character of Europe from that of the ancient world, and of the most polished states of Asia. We boast our generousness in battle, the bold display of our animosity, and our hatred of treachery and the secret meditations of revenge. To what cause can these qualities be assigned? Not to any opinions which for the last few hundred years have been infused into our character, for there is no resemblance between those qualities and any such opinions; but they can be traced back to those days of ancient Europe when the knight was quick to strike, and generous to forgive; and when he would present harness and arms to his foe rather than that the battle should be unfairly and unequally fought. This spirit, though not the form, of the chivalric times has survived to ours, and forms one of our graces and distinctions. The middle ages, as we have shown, were not entirely ages of feudal power; for the consequence of the personal nobility of chivalry was felt and acknowledged. The qualities of knighthood tempered and softened all classes of society, and worth was the passport to distinction. Thus chivalry effected more than letters could accomplish in the ancient world; for it gave rise to the personal merit which in the knight, and in his successor, the gentleman of the present day, checks the pride of birth and the presumption of wealth.

But it is in the polish of modern society that the graces of chivalry are most pleasingly displayed. The knight was charmed into courtesy by the gentle influence of woman, and the air of mildness which she diffused has never died away. While such things exist, can we altogether assent to the opinion of a celebrated author, that "the age of chivalry is gone?" Many of its forms and modes have disappeared; fixed governments and wise laws have removed the necessity for, and quenched the spirit of, knight-errantry and romance; and, happily for the world, the torch of religious persecution has long since sunk into the ashes. But chivalric imagination still waves its magic wand over us. We love to link our names with the heroic times of Europe; and our armorial shields and crests confess the pleasing illusions of chivalry. The modern orders of military merit (palpable copies of some of the forms of middle-age distinctions) constitute the cheap defence of nations, and keep alive the personal nobility of knighthood. We wage our wars not with the cruelty of Romans, but with the gallantry of cavaliers; for the same principle is in influence now which of old inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity. Courtesy of manners, that elegant drapery of chivalry, still robes our social life; and liberality of sentiment distinguishes the gentleman, as in days of yore it was wont to distinguish the knight.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

Accolade, meaning of the, 28, note.
Adelais, tale of her imprisonment, rescue by an adventurous knight, and subsequent marriage, 228.
Albigenses, romance of, 27, note.
Alcantara, order of, its principles, and its comparative rank with other Spanish orders, 116.
Alfonso, story of his chivalric bearing, 209.
Allegories, fantastic, made on knights and their armour, 44, 45.
Amys and *Amylion*, romance of, 48.
Angle-Saxons, state of chivalry among, 14, 15, 16, 124.
Antharis, a Lombard king, story of his romantic gallantry, 228.
Arabian horses, their repute in chivalric times, 45.
Arabic, Spanish historians, account of, 204, note.
Archers, excellence of English, 136. Fine passages from Halidon Hill expressive of, 136, note. An English archer in the days of Edward III., 136. Importance of, at battles of Cressy and Poictiers, 136.
Argonautes, order of, purpose of its institution, 117.
Aristotle, lay of, 75.
Armorial bearings, historical and philosophical sketch of the principles of, 38, 39.
Armour, beauty of ancient, 32. Value of inquiries into the minutiæ of, 40. Uncertainty of the subject, 41. Its general features, 42, &c. Golden armour, 43.
Array, general nature of chivalric, 47.
Arthur, his knightly honour, 51, note. Discovery of his remains at Glastonbury, account of, 122. His court the school of chivalric virtue, 122. His genorosity to his knights, 123, note. See *Round Table*.
Athenæus, his singular testimony to a state of chivalry, 14.
Auberoch, beleagured by the French, and chivalrously relieved by the English, 141.
Audley, Sir James, interesting story of his heroic achievements and of his generosity, 145.
Axe, the battle, 32. Description of King Richard's, 33, note.

Bachelor, various meanings of the word, 18, 26.
Bacinet, 39.
Baked meats, fondness of people for them in the olden time, 68, and note.
Ball, the, after a tournament, 95.
Band, Spanish order of the, objects of the order, 120. Interesting, as descriptive of the state of Spanish manners, 120. Its fine chivalry to woman, 120.
Banneret, qualification of a knight, 17. His privileges, 18. See *Chondos*.
Bannockburn, battle of, 132.
Barriers, description of, 49, note. Singular battles at the, 49, 50.
Bath, order of, ceremonies used at the ancient creation of knights of, 176, 159, &c. Modern ceremonies, 119. Absurdity of our heralds' dogmatic positiveness regarding the æra of the order's foundation, 159, note.
Batre, Claude de, a French knight. His joust with Maximilian of Germany, 226.
Bauldrick, description of the, 34.
Bayard, the chivalric, his early years, 196. Enters the service of the kings of France, 197. His valiancy, 197. His humanity, 197. His gallantry, 197. Holds a tournament in honour of the ladies, 198. His death, 198.
Beauty, knights fought to assert the superiority of their mistress' beauty, 73. The practice apparently absurd, but reason why it should not be too severely censured, 194.
Black Prince, his conduct at Limoges, 51. His courtesy, 135, 137. His liberality, 145. His deportment to Peter the Cruel, 187. Not a favourite with the nobility in the English possessions in France, 189. His cruelty to Du Guesclin, 189.
Blois, Charles of, his contention with Jane de Mountfort for the duchy of Brittany, 82.
Blue, the colour of constancy in days of chivalry, 92, note. *See Stocking*.
Bonaparte, his generousness to a descendant of Du Guesclin, 192.
Bonnelance, Sir John, his remarkable courtesy to the ladies, 70.
Boucmell, John, his joust with an English squire, 99.
Bourbon, a singular mode by which a Duke of, gained a fortress, 30.
Bourbon, order of, account of, 121.
Boucicant, Marshal, his outrageous reverence for women, 77, note. His joust at St. Ingelbertes, near Calais, 101, &c.
Bovines, importance of squires at the battle of, 27.
Break-across, to, meaning of the phrase, 93, note.

Digitized by Google

Britomart, the perfection of chivalric heroines, 86.
Brittany, revered for its chivalric fame, 183.
Bruce, Robert, his chivalric humanity, 152.
Burgundy, Bastard of, his joust with Lord Scales, 104. His skill in other jousts, 196.
Burgundy, court of, splendour of its tournaments, 195. The most chivalric country in Europe during middle of fifteenth century, 196. Chivalric circumstance at the court of, 236.

Calais, stories regarding, 137-138.
Calatrava, order of, its origin and history, 115.
Calaynos, the Moor, praised by the Spaniards, 202.
Carlisle, Sir Anthony Harclay, Earl of, ceremonies of his degradation from knighthood, 31, 32.
Carpet-knights, meaning of the term, 178.
Carpio, Bernardo del, account of, 205.
Cavalry, the principal arm of military power during the middle ages, 13.
Caxton, his lamentation over the decline of chivalry, 162. His exaggeration of the evil, 162.
Celts, humility of Celtic youths, 15.
Cervantes, curious error made by, 19. Censures the chivalric custom of making vows, 51, note. Satirises chivalric contempt of bodily pain, 120, note. Ridicules the vigil of arms, 27, note; and the pride of knights, 127, note. Accuracy of his pictures, 221.
Cesena, noble defence of, by Marzia degl' Ubaldini, 85.
Chandos, Sir John, story with the Earl of Oxenford, 24. History of his heroism, 146. Gallantry, 146. Tenacious of his armorial bearings, 146. Exploits at Auray, 147. Tries to dissuade the Black Prince from the Spanish war, 147. Ceremonies on his becoming a knight-banneret, 147. His remarkable generousness, 147. His death before the bridge of Lusac, 150, &c. General grief thereat, 151.
Character, bluntness of the old English, shown at the creation of knights of the Bath, 181.
Charity, a great chivalric virtue, instance of, 59.
Charter-house, the, founded by Sir Walter Manny, 144, and 145, note.
Charlemagne, state of chivalry, in his time, 16. His expedition into Spain, 72.
Chargny, Lord of, a famous jouster, 221. His passage of arms near Dijon, 108.
Cherbury, Edward Herbert, Lord of, memoir of him, 173. Chivalric fame of his family, 173. His vanity 174-175. Made a knight of the Bath, 174. His curious adventures in France, 175. The disgusting vanity of his infidelity, 175. His general character, 176. His inferiority to the heroes of the reign of Edward III., 176.
Chess, the high favour of this game in days of chivalry, 60. A story of a knight's love of chess, 61.
Chivalry, general oath of, 27. Form used in Scotland, 153. Exhortations to perform chivalric obligations, 27, 28. Beauty of chivalric costume, 32. First ages of, interesting to the reason, but not pleasing to the fancy, 13. Difference between the feudal and moral chivalry, 13. Origin of, 14. Nature of, 13. Modified by Christianity, 16, 17. Early ceremonies of inauguration, 16. Personal nobility of, not to be confounded with feudal territorial nobility, 17. Morals of chivalric times unjustly censured, 79. Real state of them, 79, &c. Peculiar fineness of chivalric feeling, 93, note. Declined in France before the common use of gunpowder, 196. Recapitulation of the circumstances which gave birth to, 233. Its general nature, 234. Exact time of its influence difficult to mark, 235. Its merits, 234. Its effects, 239. Application of chivalric honours to men in civil stations, 178. Connected with feudalism, 125. A compulsory honour in England, 125.
Christianity, its improvements on Gothic chivalry, 16.
Cid, the, his birth, 205. His early ferocious heroism, 205. His singular marriage, 205. Enters the service of King Ferdinand, 206. His chivalric gallantry, 206. Ceremony of his being knighted, 207. Death of the King, 207. Becomes the knight of Sancho, King of Castile, and his campeador, 207. Mixture of evil, and good in his character, 208. Supports the King in his injustice, 208. His romantic heroism, 208. His virtuous boldness, 208. His second marriage, 210. Is banished from the court of Alfonso, the brother of Sancho, 210; but recalled, 210. Is banished again, 210. Story of his unchivalric meanness, 211. His history in exile, 210. His nobleness and generosity, 213. Is recalled, 214. Captures Toledo, 215, and Valentia, 215. Unjust conduct to the Moors, 216. Marriage of his daughters, 217. His death, 217, and character, 217.
Claremont, the Lord of, his dispute with Sir John Chandos regarding armorial cognisances, 146.
Clary, the Lord of, singular story of the censure on him by the court of France for want of courtesy to Sir Peter Courtenay, 58-59.
Clergy, the weapons they used in battle, 32. A gallant fighting priest promoted to an archdeaconry, 156. Often turned knights, 115.
Clermont, council of, sanction chivalry, 16.
Clifford, Nicholas, his joust with John Boucmell, 98.
Cloth of gold, chivalric circumstances, at the field of, 165.
Cochetel, battle of, 185.
Cognisances, 38.
Coliseum, Moorish and chivalric sports in, 230. Inferiority of the old Roman games in, to those of chivalry, 88.
Colombe, Ernalton of Sainte, bravery of him and his esquire, 26.
Companions in arms, nature of such a union, 47-48.
Conde, D. José Antonio, value of his searches into Arabic Spanish historians, 204, note.
Constancy, a greater virtue in chivalric times

Digitized by Google

than in the present day, 72. Spenser's exhortation to, 73.
Constantine, fabulous order of, 122.
Conversation of knights, its subjects, 64.
Courage of the knight, 49-51.
Courtenay, Sir Peter, his adventures in France, 58, &c.
Courtesy, a knightly virtue, 59. Courtesy of a dragon, 60, note. At tournaments, 90.
Cousines, dame des belle, her reproof of a young page for his not being in love, 22.
Crawford, Sir David de Lindsay, Earl of, his joust with Lord Wells, 97.
Cross, every military order had its, 118. Wretched taste in concealing the cross of the order of the Bath by a star, 118.
Cyclas, 37.
Cyneheard, his story, 14.

Dagger of mercy, description of it, 39. Story of its use, 40.
Dambreticourt, Lord Eustace, his chivalry inspired by the lady Isabella, 72. His valour at the battle of Poictiers, 145.
Dames and *Damsels*. See *Lady*.
Degradation, ceremonies of, 30.
Derby, Earl of, the sort of death he desired, 55.
Devices, what they were, 36. Worn in tournaments, 91-92.
Discipline, chivalric array not inconsistent with feudal discipline, 54.
Douglas, story of the perilous castle of, 72. Generousness of the good Lord James of, 72, 130. His character, 130, note. The Douglas of the fourteenth century, 152. Wins the pennon of Hotspur, 155. His heroism and noble death, 156. Archibald, at Shrewsbury, 156.
Dress of ladies in chivalric times, 67. Importance of modesty of, 67.
Dub, meaning of the word, 28, note.
Dynadan, Sir, a merry knight of the Round Table, his pretended dislike of women, 69, note.

Edward I., his chivalric character, 128. A chivalric anecdote of, 54.
Edward II., state of chivalry in his reign, 130, 132.
Edward III., state of armour in his time, 41, 42. Chivalry in his reign, 132, &c.
Eliosa, the Lady, a heroine of chivalry, 80.
England, antiquity of the sarcasm of its not being the country of original invention, 146, note. The melancholy of its mirth curiously noticed, 146.
Errantry, facts relating to the knight-errantry of the middle ages, 53, 55. English knights-errant, 78. General facts and usages, 78, &c.

Falconry. See *Hawking*.
Falcons, placed on perches above knights at chivalric entertainments, 94.
Father in chivalry, the respect which a knight bore to the cavalier that knighted him, 29.
Festivals, description of chivalric, 64, 123. At tournaments, 94.
Fidelity to obligations, a great virtue in knights, 57.
Flodden, chivalric circumstances at battle of, 168.
Flowers, Romance of, remarks on, 104, note.
Forget-me-not, romance story of this flower: joust concerning it, 104.
France, state of, after the death of Du Guesclin, 192. Chivalry in baronial castles, 182. Knighthood given to improper persons, 195. Extinction of chivalry in, 200. Ridiculous imitation of chivalry by the profligate soldiers of a profligate king, 200.
Francis I., his chivalric qualities, 198. Circumstances which disgraced his chivalry, 199. Knighted by Bayard, 199.
Fraternity, origin and history of the spirit of, 14. Encouraged by the institutions of Arthur, 123.
Froissart, character of his history, *Preface*.
Frojuz, Don Rodrigo, a Spanish knight, chivalric mode of his death, 34.
Furs, fondness of people in the middle ages for them, 27, 38, notes.

Gallantry, its origin, 15. Absurdity of antiquarians respecting, 64, note.
Garter, order of the, objects of, 118. Its resemblance to a religious order, 119. Reasons of its being established, 118, 133. Commonly ascribed origin a vulgar fable, 134. Meaning of the motto 134. The collar, 134.
Gawain, Sir, a knight of Arthur's Round Table, character of, 123.
Generousness of Knights, high estimation of this quality, 57. Instances, 58, 59.
Gennet, order of the, 122.
George, Saint, the person that was understood by this name, 134.
Germans, superior virtue of German women owned by Tacitus, 15. Instances of this virtue, 15. Political chivalry had no influence in Germany, 222. German knights quailed before undisciplined troops, 223. When and where tournaments were held, 89. Heraldic pride of the, 89, note. Singular matter regarding the, 89, note. Inferiority of, to Italian condottieri, 101. Intolerance and cruelty of German knights, 101. Their education, 102. Cruelty to their squires, 102. Their avarice, 103. Little influence of German chivalry, 103. Singular exception, 103. Destruction of chivalry, 105.
Gonfanon, what it was, 32.
Gonsalez, Count Fernan de, a fabulous hero of Spanish chivalry, 205.
Gordon, Adam, his chivalry, 29.
Graville, Sir William, loses a fortress out of his love for chess-playing, 61.
Green-field, knights of the Fair Lady in the, story of their chevisance, 77.
Gueldres, Duke of, story of his regard for knightly honour, 53.
Guesclin, Bertrand du, his birth, 184. Became a cavalier in opposition to paternal wishes, 184. His knightly conduct at Rennes, 184. Amusing interview with the Duke of Lancaster, 184. His gallant bearing at Cochetel,

Digitized by Google

and the consequent recovery of the fame of the French arms, 185. Taken prisoner at Aurai, 185. Redeemed, 186. His chivalry in Spain, 186, &c. Taken prisoner again, 188. Treated with cruelty by the Black Prince, 189. Ransomed, 189. Made Constable of France, 190. Recovers the power of the French monarchy, 190. His companionship in arms with Olivier de Clisson, 190. His death before Randan, 191. Character, 192.

Harald, the valiant, account of, 15.
Hawking, a knowledge of, a necessary part of a knight's education, 21. A great chivalric amusement, 60.
Hawkwood, Sir John, story of his origin, and allusions to his battles, 20.
Helmets, 38. Various sorts of, 39.
Hennebon, noble defence of, by the Countess of Mountfort, 83-84.
Henry I. and II., state of chivalry in their respective reigns, 126, 127.
Henry II., of France, killed in a tournament, account of the circumstances, 199, and note.
Henry, Prince, son of James I., his love of chivalric exercises, 173.
Henry IV., chivalric parley between him and the Duke of Orleans, 157. His unchivalric deportment at Shrewsbury, 158.
Henry V., his love of chivalry, 157, 161. His chivalric modesty, 161.
Henry VIII., account of his tournaments, 161, &c.
Heroines, nature of female heroism in the days of chivalry, and stories of, 80, &c.
Hita, Genez Perez de, nature of his volume on the fall of Grenada, 218, note.
Homildon Hill, interesting knightly story regarding battle at, 29.
Honour, curious story of knightly, 53. The knights' pursuit of, 55. See, too, 93, note.
Horn, King, romance of, 21.
Horse of the knight, 45. What horses were preferred, 45. The famous horse of the Cid, 45, 218. Armour of the horse, 46. Always very splendidly adorned, 46.
Horsemanship, care with which knights were trained to, 26.
Hotspur fights with the Douglas, 155. His gallant deportment at Otterbourne, 155. And at Shrewsbury, 158.
Humanities of chivalric war, 50, 52.
Humanity, a knightly virtue, 59.
Hunting, young squires instructed in the art of, 21. A part of the amusements of chivalry, 60.
Huntingdon, Sir John Holland, Earl of, his skill in jousting, 102.

Inauguration, ceremony of, into knighthood, when and where performed, 27. Its circumstances, 27-28.
Inglebertes, Saint, joust at, 101-105.
Ipomydon, romance of, 21.
Isabella, the Lady, a heroine of chivalry, 81.
Italian armour, excellence of, 43, 222, note, 230.
Italy, but little martial chivalry in, 229. Chivalric education, 228. Changes of the military art in, 229. Chivalry in the north of, 230. Esteem in which the word of knighthood was held, 230. Chivalry in the south of, 231. Mode of creating knights in, 231. Religious and military orders in, 232. Political use of knighthood, 232. Folly of an Italian mob regarding knighthood, 232. School of Italian Generals, 229. Chivalric sports in, 232.
Ivanhoe, errors of the author of, regarding Anglo-Saxon and Norman chivalry, 124, note: and concerning the Knights Templars, 126, note; and also concerning the nature and names of chivalric sports, 108.

James, Saint, his popularity in Spain, 113, note; 197. Order of, 113.
James II., of Arragon, gallantry of one of his decrees, 221.
James IV., of Scotland, chivalric and romantic circumstances of his life, 167-169.
Jealousy, no part of chivalric love, 73.
Joanna of Naples, a chivalric anecdote regarding, 237.
Joust, nature of the, to the utterance, 97. For love of ladies, 97. Various à l'outrance, 97-98. A plaisance, 99, &c. Romance of, 107, 196. Use of jousts, 109.

Knights, their privileges, 18. Expensive equipment of, necessary to the dignity, 17. Preparations for knighthood, 27. His war-cry and escutcheon, 18. Qualifications, 18. Gentle birth not regarded when valour conspicuous, 19. By whom created, 19. (*For his education*, see *Squire and Page.*) Often turned priests, 17. Associations of, in defence of the ladies, 77-78. Stipendiary knights in England, 125. No resemblance between, and the equites of Rome, 17. Made in the battle-field, and in mines, 29-30. Knights of honour, description of, 90. English wore golden collars, 134. Anxiety to receive the order from great characters, 17, and 18, note. No knights made on compulsion, after the days of Charles I., 179. Degradation of, in the reign of James I., 179.
Knot, order of the, 117.
Knowles, Sir Robert, remarkable story of the heroism of one of his knights, 50.

Lady in chivalry, character of, 68, 87. Her courtesy, 87. Education, 66. Amusements, 68. Deportment, 66. What ladies could create knights, 86. Singular blending of the heroic and the tender feelings in her character, 86. Not made prisoner in war, 78. Judge in the tournament, 92, 94. Her favours worn by her knights, 92, and note.
Lahire, the singular prayer of this knight, 56.
Lance, the chief weapon of the knight, 32. The staff made from the ash-tree, 32.
Langurant, Lord of, bravery of, and of his squire, 26, and note. Another story, 40.
Largess distributed at ceremonial of inauguration, 29. At tournaments, 95.

Digitized by Google

Launcelot, generous modesty of this knight, 59. Singular proof of his high reputation, 28, note. Beautiful lamentation over his dead body, 123.
Lee, Sir Henry, his gallantry, 171.
Legnano, battle of, 223.
Liberality, a great virtue in chivalry, 59.
Liegois, their battle with the French chivalry, 193.
Lists, description of the, 90.
London, citizens of, their taste for chivalric amusements, 135.
Lords, House of, errors of its committees, 17, note.
Lorrys, Sir Launcelot de, a gallant knight, killed in a joust for love of his lady, 97.
Love, peculiarities of chivalric, 74, 75, 77, 69, &c. Perfection and purity of chivalric, 101. Quick-sightedness of country matrons regarding signs of, 228.
Louis, Saint, his barbarous intolerance, 56.
Loyes, Sir, of Spain, his cruelty, 57.

Mail-armour, various descriptions of, 35, 36. Mail and plate, 37. Mail worn in all ages of chivalry, 37.
Manny, Sir Walter, succours the Countess of Mountfort, 84. His bravery at Calais, 137. An amorous knight, 140. His kindness to two brother-knights, 141. His joyous adventurousness, 141. Other fears, 141, &c. His filial piety, 22. Gentleness of his disposition, 143. His rank in England, 144. His sageness, 144. His liberality, 144. Founds the Charter-house, 144.
March, Countess of, story of her chivalric heroism in defending the castle of Dunbar, 81.
Marche, Thomas de la, his duel with John de Visconti, 189.
Martel, nature of that weapon, 32.
Marzia degl' Ubaldini, story of her heroic deportment at Cesena, 85.
Maule, its qualities, 32. Not a perfectly chivalric weapon, 34.
Maximilian the only Emperor of Germany of a chivalrous character, 221. His joust with a French knight, 221.
Medicine, knowledge of, possessed by dames and damsels, 67. Faith of knights in medicines administered by women, 67.
Medici, Lorenzo de, won a prize at a tournament, 90.
Men-at-arms, manner of their fighting, and description of their armour, 44.
Mercenaries, their use in the French army, 194.
Mercy, order of our Lady of, reason of the establishing of the, 116.
Merlo, Sir John, a Spanish knight, account of his jousting in Burgundy, 221-222.
Meyrick, Dr., character of his critical inquiry into ancient armour, 36, note; 42, note; 46, note.
Michael of the Wing, purposes of the establishing of this order, 117.
Milan, Sir Galeas, Duke of, his courtesy to the Earl of Derby, 230.
Milanese armour, excellence of. See *Italian* armour.
Missals, the merits of, decided by battle, 218.
Minstrels, description of them and their art in connection with chivalry, 61, &c. Their chivalric importance in Italy, 229.
Molai, Jacques de, appoints a successor to his authority over the Templars, 112.
Montferrand, Regnaud de, the romantic excess of his love for chivalric honours, 30.
Montglaive, Guerin de, 22.
Montpensier, Henry de Bourbon, his death in a tournament, 200.
Mountfort, Jane de, tale of her heroism, 82.
Music, ladies in chivalry were taught, 66.

Naples, chivalry at, 231. Ceremonies of chivalric inauguration in, 231.
Navaret, battle of, 188.
Nobility, education of English, in the sixteenth century, 166.
Normans, nature of their chivalry, 124. Plant chivalry in Italy, 231.

Oak, in Navarre, order of, 122.
Obedience, dignity of, 14.
Olympic games, their inferiority to the games of chivalry, 88.
Orbigo, account of a singular passage of arms at, 218-220.
Orders, the religious, their general principles, 109. Qualifications for them, 110. Use of the religious, 111. Military orders, 111. Dormant orders, 120. Singular titles of, 121.
Ordonnance, companies of, established by Charles VII., their unchivalric nature, 194.
Orleans, Duke of, his satire on the heaviness of English armour, 39.
Orris, Michael de, the romantic and chivalrous nature of his love, 107.
Ostrich feathers, whether originally a crest or a device of the Black Prince, 42, &c.
Otterbourne, description of that chivalric battle, 155.
Oxenford, Earl of, amusing story of his absurd pride, 24.
Oxford, Edward Vere, Earl of, his coxcombry and romantic gallantry, 176.

Page, the first gradation in chivalry, 21. At what age a boy became one, 21. His duties, 22. Personal service, 22. Taught love, religion, and war, 22. His martial exercises, 23. (See *Saintré*.) Combats of pages, 194. State of English pages during the nineteenth century, 176.
Palaye, Sainte, character of his Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry, *Preface*.
Paleaz, Martin, a Spanish knight, his story, 213.
Passage of arms, what it was, 108. Error of the author of Ivanhoe concerning, 108, note. Description of one in Burgundy, 108; and at Orbigo, in Spain, 219.
Patriotism, not necessarily a knightly virtue, 53. But encouraged by the religious and military orders, 110.
Peacock, festival and vow of the, 64. Mode of dressing the, 64, note.
Pelayo, his history, 204.

Digitized by Google

Pembroke, Earl, stories of, 148-149.
Penitents of love, a singular set of fanatics in France, 74.
Pennon, the streamer at the end of a lance, 32.
Perceval, Mr. George, excellence of his history of Italy, *Preface*. Cited, 43, note; 197, 229, note; 229-230.
Percy. See *Hotspur*.
Perfumes, fondness of people in the middle ages for, 69, note.
Philippa, Queen, her heroism, 81.
Plate-armour, description of, 37. Its inconveniences, 37, 42, note.
Peter the Cruel, his history, 186, &c.
Politeness of knights in battle, 52.
Pride of knights ridiculed by Cervantes, 127.
Prisoners, when made by knights, delivered to the squires, 25. Curious pride of knights concerning, 53. Ladies were never made prisoners, 78.
Pursuivant of love, the favourite title of a knight, 71.
Pye, Lord Saint, his skill in jousting, 102, &c.

Quinones, Sueno de, account of his holding a passage of arms at Orbigo, in Spain, 119.
Quintain, nature of that amusement, 26.

Ramsey, William de, the chivalric nature of his death, 56.
Ransoming, the general principles of, in chivalric times, 52.
Rapier, an Italian weapon, 172. Fighting with it supersedes the sword and buckler, 117.
Religion, nature of the knight's, 55-56. Brevity of his devotions, 57. Curious instance of it, 56. The chivalric glory of a man being shriven in his helmet, 56. Intolerance of the knight, 56. His ferocity against Pagans and Saracens, 56. His idle impiety at a tournament, 90. Maintained opinions by the sword, 114.
Rienzi, Cola di, instance of his coxcombry, 231, note.
Richard I., description of his battle-axe, 33. His chivalric character, 127.
Rivers, mystery of, meaning of the phrase, 21.
Romance of chivalry displayed in the tournament, 89. Great estimation of romances in chivalric times, 63. Beneficial effects of, on chivalry, 182. Their popularity in England during the 16th century, 162. Effects on Italy, 233.
Roncesvalles, chivalric march through the valley of, by the soldiers of the Black Prince, 188. Question regarding battles in, at the time of Charlemagne, 206.
Round Table, when and where held in England, 133. Number of knights attached to the, fabulous, 122, note.
Roy, Raynolde du, a good jouster, chivalric reason for it, 103.
Rybamount, courtesy of Edward III. to Lord Eustace of, 137.

Sageness, meaning of this old word, 50.
Saintré, Jean de, curious account of the education in love of this knight, 22.
Scales, Anthony Woodville, Lord, his joust with the Bastard of Burgundy, 104.
Scarf, ladies', on the knight, 37, 38, 42.
Scotland, form of chivalric oath in, 153. Chivalric circumstances, 153. Frenchmen's opinions of Scotsmen's chivalry, 154. Reasons for Englishmen's dislike of wars in, 154. Courtesies between English and Scottish knights, 154. See *James IV*.
Shield, sentiments of honour connected with the, 35. Its various shapes, 35.
Sidney, Sir Philip, his chivalric character, 170. His Arcadia, 170. Circumstances of his life, 170. Remarkable grief at his death, 170. Uncommon kindness of the Sidney family, 170, and note. His description of the nature of chivalric courage, 51, note. His apology for ladies studying surgery, 67.
Sir, its title in chivalry, 17.
Skottowe, Mr., excellence of his work on Shakspeare, 73, note.
Smithfield, anciently the principal tilting ground in London, 91. Used for other purposes, note, 91. Its state in the sixteenth century evidence of the degeneracy of chivalry, 172, note.
Spain, religious orders in, account of, 113. General nature of Spanish chivalry, 200. Religion and heroism, 200. Gallantry, 201, 220. Curious blending of Spanish and Oriental manners, 201. Beneficial effects from the union of Moors and Spaniards, 201. Religious toleration in Spain, 202. Loves and friendships of Moors and Christians, 202. Peculiarities of Spanish Chivalry, 202. Forms of Knighthood, 202. Various classes of knights, 203. Spanish knights travel to distant countries, asserting the beauty of Spanish maidens, 220. Extinction of Spanish chivalry, 221. The knight's idolatry of women outlives this extinction, 222. Spanish poetry, 204. Story of Spanish manners, 213-215. State of Spanish chivalry after the death of the Cid, 218.
Spenser, his Fairy Queen supports chivalry, 170. Object of the poem, 170. Poem cited, passim.
Spices, fondness of knights for them, 62, note; 94.
Spurs, buckling them on, a part of chivalric inauguration ceremonies, 28. Suspended in churches as memorials of victory and honour, 223, note.
Squire, his personal and chivalric duties, 23, 24. Never sat at the same table with knights, 23. Story of a high-spirited squire, 24. His dress, 24. Various sorts of squires, 24. Spenser's picture of one, 24. His duties in battle, 25. Carried the pennon of a knight, 25. His gallantry, 25, 26. His martial exercises, 26. Undertook military expeditions, 26. His services in the battle-field, 25, 26. Nature of his armour, 44. Story of the boldness of a, 50. English squires wore silver collars, 134. See *Bovines*.
Squirehood, the third class of the general order of chivalry, 20. Of whom it was formed, 20.

Digitized by Google

Stephen, his courtesy to Matilda, 58. Important effects of chivalry in his reign, 126.
Stocking, order of the, 124. Origin of the phrase Blue Stocking, 124. This contemptuous expression no longer applicable to English women, 124.
Stothard, Mrs. Charles, her Tour in Normandy cited, 82, note.
Surcoats, their materials and purposes, 37. Of the military orders, 38.
Surgery, knowledge of, possessed by ladies in chivalric times, 67.
Surry, Earl of, incorrectness of the common tale regarding, 166.
Swinton, Sir John, his fine heroism, 29. Another story of the heroism of a, 50.
Sword, girding of it on the knight a part of the chivalric inauguration ceremonies, 16, 31. The favourite weapon of the knight, 33. Swords had names and mottoes; the cross hilt; the handle contained the knight's seal; Spanish swords, 633-35. Story of the Cid's favourite swords, 216.

Tabard, description of, 37.
Templars, Knights, extravagance of their ascetism, 107, note. Errors of the author of Waverley regarding, 111, note. The valiancy of the, 111. Succession of Grand Masters from the persecution to the present time, 112, &c. Present state of, 113. Their importance in Spain, 225.
Thistle, order of the, 118. Its absurd pretensions to antiquity, 118.
Thomson, Anthony Todd, value of his botanical lectures, 104, note.
Tournaments, superiority of, to Grecian games, 87. Origin of, 88. Objects, 88, and notes, Qualifications for tourneying, 89, 91. Who tourneyed, 89. Ceremonies of the, 89. Procession to the, 90. Nature of tourneying weapons, 91. The preparation, 92. The encounter, 92. English regulations concerning, 94, note. Opposed by the Popes, 96, note. Their frequency in the reign of Edward III., 132. Time of their death in England, 173. Female tournament in Germany, 221.
Tristrem, Romance of, 21.

Valet, the common title of the page, 23.
Vargas, Garcia Perez de, a splendid exemplar of Spanish chivalry. Story of his romantic gallantry, 219.
Vigil of arms, a necessary preliminary to knighthood, 27.
Vilain, Sir John, anecdote of his remarkable prowess, 33.
Virtue, degree of, expected in a knight, 56.
Visconti, John de, his duel with Thomas de la Marche, 139.
Vows, knightly, courage incited by, 50. Fantastic, 50, &c., 107.

Wallop, Sir John, his men break lances for ladies' love, 167.
Warwick, an earl of, a famous jouster, 100.
Wells, Lord, his joust with Sir David de Lindsay, first Earl of Crawford, 97.
Werner, fiend-like ferocity and impiety of, 230.
William Rufus, authors wrong, in calling him a chivalric king, 127. But he promoted the growth of chivalry in England, 125.
Wines, dislike entertained by the Englishmen of old for the wines of Spain, 54. Wines drank in chivalric times, 68, and note. Wines and spices, 62, note.
Woods, mystery of, 21.
Worcester, John, Earl of, Constable. His regulations regarding tournaments in England, 94, note.
Wordsworth, his beautiful description of the occupations and life of a minstrel, 63.

Ximena, a Spanish maiden, story of her voluntary marriage with her father's murderer, 206.

Zamora, story of that town and the Cid of Spain, 209.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

CANCELLED
BOOK DUE
FEB 9 1983
7703340

CANCELLED
BOOK DUE
MAY 5 1986
MAY 1 1986
1906162

Digitized by Google

H 6038.26.7
The history of chivalry; or, Knight
Widener Library 006096374
3 2044 088 080 585

Digitized by Google